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# M E L A N I E

AND

Other Poems.

1



# M E L A N I E

AND

*Other Poems.*

B Y N. P. W I L L I S.

EDITED BY BARRY CORNWALL.

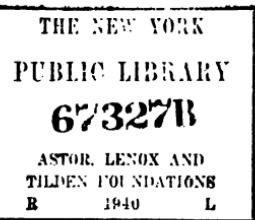
" Pray pardon me ;  
For I am like a boy that hath found money,  
Afraid I dream still."

WEBSTER.

LONDON :  
SAUNDERS AND OTLEY, CONDUIT STREET.

M D C C C X X X V .

R. B. F.



LONDON :  
IBOTSON AND PALMER, PRINTERS, SAVOY STREET.

**Dedicated**

**TO**

**THE EARL OF DALHOUSIE,**

**AS**

A TRIBUTE OF RESPECT AND ATTACHMENT.

WOR 19 FEB. 83.



## PREFACE BY THE EDITOR.

---

I HAVE been invited to introduce the following Poems to the English public; and it gives me pleasure to do so ; partly for the sake of the author, (a man of high talent and sensibility,) and partly because it is incumbent upon every member of literature, however unimportant he may be, to do his best to diminish the space that separates America from England.

This is not the place to speak of the author, even as he deserves. *He* would object to my eulogiums, probably, as flagrant and unmerited ; and *I* should

not be satisfied with administering any thing short of the praise due to him. Although an American, (the proselytes of our reigning politics will smile at this,) he does not exist upon panegyric. He can afford to render admiration to others, and to think modestly of himself. All which being the case, I shall leave the poet to ingratiate himself, after his own fashion, with the reader, and proceed to say a few words, generally, on the writers who have risen up on the other side of the Atlantic.

It is clear that we have, until lately, done injustice to American writers. We have tested them by an unfair rule, and have measured them by their weakness only, and not by their strength. And this has been done, not in sincere error, or in an honest attempt to arrive at their real merits—but evidently for the sake of exalting ourselves, or depressing them. A system like this

cannot be too much discountenanced by men of letters. And how foolish and injurious is it, to be perpetually boasting of this or that thing achieved by the separate countries!—as though every good deed, whether in America or England, were not done for the credit of our common literature. If every individual scribbler were to stand up solely for his own little trumpery distinction, and cavil at all other writers who contributed their share to the general stock of amusement, should we not hoot him down with contempt? Why do the liberal English people, then, allow the spleen or ill-blood of any man or set of men to vitiate their taste? to blind their understanding? to widen the breach between them and their American friends? Such dishonesty is a betrayal of the cause of literature, a calumny on the English character, and should be reprobated and punished accordingly like any corresponding private slander.

If we possess an advantage in some respects over America, by reason of our having had more opportunities of cultivating the mere elegancies of letters, yet, in others, our superiority is by no means evident. The public works of the United States (the results of great activity of mind and matchless perseverance of character) put our own to shame. And in mechanics, and all that relates to practical science, the men of America are fully as well educated as ourselves. What more is wanted to entitle them to respect? They have already done all that a young nation could be expected to accomplish; and Time will bring them the rest. It will bring them essayists, novelists, historians, as good and numerous as ours; and poets also as lofty (with one unapproachable exception) as any that we have been accustomed to deify. The great and free land of America must of necessity produce great poets and eminent men. With the

deeds of their bold fathers before them—with their boundless forests and savannahs, swarming with anecdotes of solitary adventure—with Niagara thundering in their ears, and the Spirit of Freedom hovering above them, it is clear that they do not lack material for song. Shakspeare, indeed, will probably reign for ever without an equal; and some time may elapse before an American Milton shall rise in that majestic country; but the period will come at last; and in the meantime, there will be many who may justly lay claim to the leaves and branches of the true laurel—who will earn for themselves the love and respect of their countrymen, and deservedly occupy all the other gradations of renown. Already there are candidates in the field, with whom it is an honour to run in the honourable race of fame. Mr. Cooper (a host in himself) may, on his own ground, dare competition with any writer whatever; Brockden Brown,

Washington Irving, Paulding, and Miss Sedgwick, are all writers of high and unquestioned talent; and Mr. Bryant, Mr. Halleck, and Mr. Willis, stand out from the ranks of common poets. What precise station on the two-forked hill these latter gentlemen have a right to occupy, it is not for us, their cotemporaries, to decide. We are ourselves in a state of sufficient uncertainty as to our position. We cannot, in short, determine, without much hazard and presumption, on the exact quantity of fame which belongs to our American brothers. But we may, if we look steadily and search fairly, see enough, in what they have accomplished, to attract our good-will, and to excite genuine admiration; and it would surely be as creditable to us to confess this, and to give pleasure to those who have pleased us, as to rake up the bitter ashes of enmity, and foment anger and useless jealousy between two great countries.

Feeling all this, and entertaining a due sense of

the genius of Mr. Willis, I have ventured to introduce his writings to the English public. I do this with pleasure, as I have said, but with sincere diffidence also, and with the most perfect consciousness that they can gain nothing from whatever so humble a person as I am can say in their favour. Luckily, they can speak eloquently for themselves, and to this eloquence I leave them.

B. C.

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NOTE BY THE AUTHOR.

The Author may be excused, perhaps, for stating, that he came to England merely in the course of travel, without the most distant idea of publishing a volume of Poems. The appearance in different periodicals of some of his early verses (the kindly meant office of some of the literary friends he has had the happiness to meet) induced him, on the principle of a choice in evils, to take his poetical reputation into his own hands. A selection from former publications was already in possession of the publishers, when it occurred to him that he might as well turn a London winter to account, and most of

the poems in the first part of the volume date accordingly from the corner of a Club in the ungenial month of January. The book is divided, rather ambitiously it may seem, into three parts; but the interval of four years which has occurred since he last meddled with rhyme, extends also between the dates of the second and third parts of the volume—a difference in the ages at which they were severally written which he thought it as well to mark by a formal division, and upon which he claims a corresponding indulgence.

While he has the *parole*, the Author may, perhaps, be permitted to express his sense of the manner, most gratifying with respect to his country, and most flattering with respect to himself, in which his humble volume is introduced to the English reader. Love of England (he speaks not alone for himself) would be a difficult lesson to unlearn on the other side of the water, whatever party critics of either nation may say, and however readers of little thought and less liberality may feel. In this particular case, he is content to sink or swim as the eloquent and generous sentiments of his preface find, or not, a grateful response in the best hearts of his country. If he could have read his horoscope before leaving its shores, the honour of seeing his name associated in any way with that of Barry Cornwall, would have satisfied him with the potency of his star. It could not be in more fortunate conjunction, either for friendship or fame.

*Athenæum Club, Feb. 1835.*

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P A R T I.





## M E L A N I E.

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### I.

I stood on yonder rocky brow,\*  
And marvell'd at the Sybil's fane,  
When I was not what I am now.  
  
My life was then untouch'd of pain ;  
And, as the breeze that stirr'd my hair,  
My spirit freshened in the sky,  
And all things that were true and fair  
Lay closely to my loving eye,  
With nothing shadowy between—  
I was a boy of seventeen.

\* The story is told during a walk around the Cascatelles of Tivoli.

Yon wondrous temple crests the rock,  
As light, upon its giddy base,  
As stirless with the torrent's shock,  
As pure in its proportioned grace,  
And seems a thing of air, as then,  
Afloat above this fairy glen ;  
But though mine eye will kindle still  
In looking on the shapes of art,  
The link is lost that sent the thrill,  
Like lightning, instant to my heart.  
And thus may break, before we die,  
Th' electric chain 'twixt soul and eye !

Ten years—like yon bright valley, sown  
Alternately with weeds and flowers,—  
Had swiftly, if not gaily, flown,  
And still I lov'd the rosy Hours ;  
And if there lurk'd within my breast  
Some nerve that had been overstrung  
And quiver'd in my hours of rest,  
Like bells by their own echo rung,

I was with Hope a masquer yet,  
And well could hide the look of sadness  
And, if my heart would not forget,  
I knew, at least, the trick of gladness,  
And when another sang the strain,  
I mingled in the old refrain.

'Twere idle to remember now,  
Had I the heart, my thwarted schemes.  
I bear beneath this alter'd brow  
The ashes of a thousand dreams—  
Some wrought of wild Ambition's fingers,  
Some coloured of Love's pencil well—  
But none of which a shadow lingers,  
And none whose story I could tell.  
Enough, that when I climbed again  
To Tivoli's romantic steep,  
Life had no joy, and scarce a pain,  
Whose wells I had not tasted deep ;  
And from my lips the thirst had pass'd  
For every fount save one — the sweetest —and the  
last.

The last—the last ! My friends were dead,  
Or false ; my mother in her grave ;  
Above my father's honor'd head  
The sea had lock'd its hiding wave ;  
Ambition had but foil'd my grasp,  
And love had perish'd in my clasp ;  
And still, I say, I did not slack  
My love of life, and hope of pleasure,  
But gather'd my affections back ;  
And, as the miser hugs his treasure  
When plague and ruin bid him flee,  
I closer clung to mine—my lov'd, lost Melanie !

The last of the De Brevern race,  
My sister claimed no kinsman's care ;  
And, looking from each other's face,  
The eye stole upward unaware—  
For there was nought whereon to lean  
Each other's heart and heaven between—  
Yet that was world enough for me,  
And, for a brief but blessed while,

There seemed no care for Melanie  
If she could see her brother smile ;  
But life with her was at the flow,  
And every wave went sparkling higher,  
While mine was ebbing, fast and low,  
From the same shore of vain desire,  
And knew I, with prophetic heart,  
That we were wearing aye insensibly apart.

## II.

We came to Italy. I felt  
A yearning for its sunny sky ;  
My very spirit seem'd to melt  
As swept its first warm breezes by.  
From lip and cheek a chilling mist,  
From life and soul a frozen rime,  
By every breath seem'd softly kiss'd—  
God's blessing on its radiant clime !  
It was an endless joy to me  
To see my sister's new delight ;

From Venice in its golden sea  
To Pœstum in its purple light,  
By sweet Val d'Arno's tinted hills,  
In Vallombrosa's convent-gloom,  
Mid Terni's vale of singing rills,  
By deathless lairs in solemn Rome,  
In gay Palermo's "Golden Shell,"  
At Arethusa's hidden well—  
We loiter'd like th' impassion'd sun  
That slept so lovingly on all,  
And made a home of every one—  
Ruin, and fane, and waterfall—  
And crown'd the dying day with glory  
If we had seen, since morn, but one old haunt of story.

We came with Spring to Tivoli.  
My sister lov'd its laughing air  
And merry waters, though, for me,  
My heart was in another key,  
And sometimes I could scarcely bear  
The mirth of their eternal play,



And, like a child that longs for home  
When weary of its holiday,  
I sighed for melancholy Rome.  
Perhaps—the fancy haunts me still—  
'Twas but a boding sense of ill.

It was a morn, of such a day  
As might have dawn'd on Eden first,  
Early in the Italian May.  
Vine-leaf and flower had newly burst,  
And on the burthen of the air  
The breath of buds came faint and rare ;  
And far in the transparent sky  
The small, earth-keeping birds were seen  
Soaring deliriously high ;  
And through the clefts of newer green  
Yon waters dash'd their living pearls ;  
And with a gayer smile and bow  
Troop'd on the merry village girls ;  
And from the Contadino's brow  
The low-slouch'd hat was backward thrown,  
With air that scarcely seem'd his own ;

And Melanie, with lips apart,  
And clasp'd hands upon my arm,  
Flung open her impassion'd heart,  
And bless'd life's mere and breathing charm,  
And sang old songs, and gather'd flowers,  
And passionately bless'd once more life's thrilling hours.

In happiness and idleness  
We wandered down yon sunny vale—  
Oh mocking eyes!—a golden tress  
Floats back upon this summer gale!  
A foot is tripping on the grass!  
A laugh rings merry in mine ear!  
I see a bounding shadow pass!—  
O God! my sister *once* was here!  
Come with me, friend!—We rested yon!  
There grew a flower she pluck'd and wore  
She sat upon this mossy stone!—  
That broken fountain running o'er  
With the same ring, like silver bells.  
She listen'd to its babbling flow,

And said, “ Perhaps the gossip tells  
Some fountain-nymph’s love-story now ! ”  
And as her laugh rang clear and wild,  
A youth—a painter—passed and smiled.

He gave the greeting of the morn  
With voice that lingered in mine ear.  
I knew him sad and gentle born  
By those two words so calm and clear.  
His frame was slight, his forehead high  
And swept by threads of raven hair,  
The fire of thought was in his eye,  
And he was pale and marble fair,  
And Grecian chisel never caught  
The soul in those slight features wrought.  
I watch’d his graceful step of pride,  
Till hidden by yon leaning tree,  
And lov’d him ere the echo died ;  
And so, alas ! did Melanie !

We sat and watch’d the fount awhile  
In silence, but our thoughts were one ;

And then arose, and with a smile  
    Of sympathy, we saunter'd on ;  
And she by sudden fits was gay,  
And then her laughter died away,  
    And in this changefulness of mood,  
Forgotten now those May-day spells,  
    We turn'd where Varro's villa stood  
And gazing on the Cascatelles,  
    (Whose hurrying waters wild and white  
        Seem madden'd as they burst to light)  
I chanced to turn my eyes away,  
    And lo ! upon a bank alone,  
The youthful painter, sleeping, lay !  
    His pencils on the grass were thrown,  
And by his side a sketch was flung,  
    And near him as I lightly crept,  
        To see the picture as he slept,  
Upon his feet he lightly sprung ;  
    And gazing with a wild surprise  
Upon the face of Melanie,  
    He said—and dropp'd his earnest eyes—  
“ Forgive me ! but I dream'd of thee !”

His sketch, the while, was in my hand,  
And, for the lines I look'd to trace—  
A torrent by a palace spann'd,  
Half-classic and half fairy-land—  
I only found—my sister's face !

## III.

Our life was changed. Another love  
In its lone woof began to twine ;  
But ah ! the golden thread was wove  
Between my sister's heart and mine !  
She who had liv'd for me before—  
She who had smiled for me alone—  
Would live and smile for me no more !  
The echo to my heart was gone !  
It seemed to me the very skies  
Had shone through those averted eyes ;  
The air had breath'd of balm—the flower  
Of radiant beauty seemed to be—  
But as *she* lov'd them, hour by hour,  
And murmur'd of that love to *me* !

Oh, though it be so heavenly high  
The selfishness of earth above,  
That, of the watchers in the sky,  
He sleeps who guards a brother's love—  
Though to a sister's present weal  
The deep devotion far transcends  
The utmost that the soul can feel  
For even its own higher ends—  
Though next to God, and more than heaven  
For his own sake, he loves her, even—  
Tis difficult to see another,  
A passing stranger of a day  
Who never hath been friend or brother,  
Pluck with a look her heart away—  
To see the fair, unsullied brow,  
Ne'er kiss'd before without a prayer,  
Upon a stranger's bosom now,  
Who for the boon took little care—  
Who is enrich'd, he knows not why—  
Who suddenly hath found a treasure  
Golconda were too poor to buy,  
And he, perhaps, too cold to measure—

(Albeit, in her forgetful dream,  
Th' unconscious idol happier seem,)  
'Tis difficult at once to crush  
The rebel mourner in the breast,  
To press the heart to earth and hush  
Its bitter jealousy to rest—  
And difficult—the eye gets dim,  
The lip wants power—to smile on him !

I thank sweet Mary Mother now,  
Who gave me strength those pangs to hide,  
And touch'd mine eyes and lit my brow  
With sunshine that my heart belied.  
I never spoke of wealth or race  
To one who ask'd so much from me—  
I looked but in my sister's face,  
And mus'd if she would happier be ;  
And hour by hour, and day by day,  
I lov'd the gentle painter more,  
And in the same soft measure wore  
My selfish jealousy away ;

And I began to watch his mood,  
And feel with her love's trembling care,  
And bade God bless him as he woo'd  
That loving girl so fond and fair,  
And on my mind would sometimes press  
A fear that she might love him less.

But Melanie—I little dream'd  
What spells the stirring heart may move—  
Pygmalion's statue never seem'd  
More changed with life, than she with love.  
The pearl tint of the early dawn  
Flush'd into day-spring's rosy hue—  
The meek, moss-folded bud of morn  
Flung open to the light and dew—  
The first and half-seen star of even  
Wax'd clear amid the deepening heaven—  
Similitudes perchance may be,  
But these are changes oftener seen,  
And do not image half to me  
My sister's change of face and mien.

'Twas written in her very air  
That Love had passed and enter'd there.

## IV

A calm and lovely paradise  
Is Italy, for minds at ease.  
The sadness of its sunny skies  
Weighs not upon the lives of these.  
The ruin'd aisle, the crumbling fane,  
The broken column, vast and proné,  
It may be joy—it may be pain—  
Amid such wrecks to walk alone!  
The saddest man will sadder be,  
The gentlest lover gentler there,  
As if, whate'er the spirit's key,  
It strengthened in that solemn air.

The heart soon grows to mournful things,  
And Italy has not a breeze  
But comes on melancholy wings;  
And even her majestic trees

Stand ghost-like in the Cæsar's home,  
As if their conscious roots were set  
In the old graves of giant Rome,  
And drew their sap all kingly yet !  
And every stone your feet beneath  
Is broken from some mighty thought,  
And sculptures in the dust still breathe  
The fire with which their lines were wrought,  
And sunder'd arch, and plunder'd tomb  
Still thunder back the echo, "Rome!"

Yet gaily o'er Egeria's fount  
The ivy flings its emerald veil,  
And flowers grow fair on Numa's mount,  
And light-sprung arches span the dale,  
And soft, from Caracalla's Baths,  
The herdsman's song comes down the breeze,  
While climb his goats the giddy paths  
To grass-grown architrave and frieze ;  
And gracefully Albano's hill  
Curves into the horizon's line,

And sweetly sings that classic rill,  
And fairly stands that nameless shrine,  
And here, oh, many a sultry noon  
And starry eve, that happy June,  
Came Angelo and Melanie,  
And earth for us was all in tune—  
For while Love talk'd with them, Hope walked apart  
with me !

## V.

I shrink from the embittered close  
Of my own melancholy tale.  
'Tis long since I have waked my woes—  
And nerve and voice together fail !  
The throb beats faster at my brow,  
My brain feels warm with starting tears,  
And I shall weep—but heed not thou !  
'Twill soothe awhile the ache of years.  
The heart transfix'd—worn out with grief—  
Will turn the arrow for relief.

The painter was a child of shame !  
It stirr'd my pride to know it first,  
For I had question'd but his name,  
And thought, alas ! I knew the worst,  
Believing him unknown and poor.  
His blood, indeed, was not obscure ;  
A high-born Conti was his mother,  
But, though he knew one parent's face,  
He never had beheld the other,  
Nor knew his country or his race.  
The Roman hid his daughter's shame  
Within St. Mona's convent wall,  
And gave the boy a painter's name—  
And little else to live withal !  
And, with a noble's high desires  
For ever mounting in his heart,  
The boy consum'd with hidden fires,  
But wrought in silence at his art ;  
And sometimes at St. Mona's shrine,  
Worn thin with penance harsh and long,  
He saw his mother's form divine,  
And lov'd her for their mutual wrong.

I said my pride was stirr'd—but no !  
The voice that told its bitter tale  
Was touch'd so mournfully with wo,  
And, as he ceas'd, all deathly pale,  
He loos'd the hand of Melanie,  
And gaz'd so gaspingly on me—  
The demon in my bosom died !  
“ Not thine,” I said, “ another's guilt ;  
I break no hearts for silly pride ;  
So, kiss yon weeper if thou wilt !”

## VI.

St. Mona's morning mass was done.  
The shrine-lamps struggled with the day ;  
And rising slowly, one by one,  
Stole the last worshippers away.  
The organist played out the hymn,  
The incense, to St. Mary swung,  
Had mounted to the cherubim,  
Or to the pillars thinly clung ;

And boyish chorister replaced  
The missal that was read no more,  
And clos'd, with half irreverent haste,  
Confessional and chancel door ;  
And as, through aisle and oriel pane,  
The sun wore round his slanting beam,  
The dying martyr stirr'd again,  
And warriors battled in its gleam ;  
And costly tomb and sculptur'd knight  
Show'd warm and wondrous in the light.

I have not said that Melanie  
Was radiantly fair—  
This earth again may never see  
A loveliness so rare !  
She glided up St. Mona's aisle  
That morning as a bride,  
And, full as was my heart the while,  
I bless'd her in my pride !  
The fountain may not fail the less  
Whose sands are golden ore,

And a sister for her loveliness,  
May not be lov'd the more ;  
But as, the fount's full heart beneath,  
Those golden sparkles shine,  
My sister's beauty seem'd to breathe  
Its brightness over mine !

St. Mona has a chapel dim  
Within the altar's fretted pale,  
Where faintly comes the swelling hymn,  
And dies, half lost, the anthem's wail.  
And here, in twilight meet for prayer,  
A single lamp hangs o'er the shrine,  
And Raphael's Mary, soft and fair,  
Looks down with sweetness half divine,  
And here St. Mona's nuns alway  
Through lattic'd bars are seen to pray.

Avé and sacrament were o'er,  
And Angelo and Melanie  
Still knelt the holy shrine before ;  
But prayer, that morn was not for me !

---

My heart was lock'd ! The lip might stir,  
The frame might agonize—and yet,  
Oh God ! I could not pray for *her* !  
A seal upon my soul was set—  
My brow was hot—my brain opprest—  
And fiends seem'd muttering round, “ Your bridal is  
unblest !”

With forehead to the lattice laid,  
And thin, white fingers straining through,  
A nun the while had softly pray'd.  
Oh, ev'n in prayer that voice I knew !  
Each faltering word—each mournful tone—  
Each pleading cadence, half-suppress'd—  
Such music had its like alone  
On lips that stole it at her breast !  
And ere the orison was done  
I lov'd the mother as the son !

And now, the marriage vows to hear,  
The nun unveil'd her brow—

When, sudden, to my startled ear,  
There crept a whisper, hoarse like fear,  
“*De Brevern ! is it thou !*”  
The priest let fall the golden ring,  
The bridegroom stood aghast,  
While, like some weird and frantic thing,  
The nun was muttering fast ;  
And as, in dread, I nearer drew,  
She thrust her arms the lattice through,  
And held me to her straining view—  
But suddenly begun  
To steal upon her brain a light  
That stagger’d soul, and sense, and sight,  
And, with a mouth all ashy white,  
She shriek’d, “*It is his son !*”  
*The bridegroom is thy blood—thy brother !*  
*Rodolph de Brevern wrong’d his mother !*  
And, as that doom of love was heard,  
My sister sunk—and died—without a sign or word !



I shed no tear for her. She died  
With her last sunshine in her eyes.  
Earth held for her no joy beside  
The hope just shatter'd—and she lies  
In a green nook of yonder dell;  
And near her, in a newer bed,  
Her lover—brother—sleeps as well !  
Peace to the broken-hearted dead !

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**LORD IVON AND HIS DAUGHTER.**



## LORD IVON AND HIS DAUGHTER.

---

"Dost thou despise  
A love like *this*! A lady should not scorn  
One soul that loves her, howe'er lowly it be."

BARRY CORNWALL.

---

### LORD IVON.

How beautiful it is! Come here, my daughter!  
Is't not a face of most bewildering brightness?

### ISIDORE.

The features are all fair, sir, but so cold—  
I could not love such beauty!



LORD IVON.

Yet, ev'n so

Look'd thy lost mother, Isidore ! Her brow  
Lofty like this—her lips thus delicate,  
Yet icy cold in their slight vermeil threads—  
Her neck thus queenly, and the sweeping curve  
Thus matchless, from the small and “pearl-round  
ear”  
To the o'er-polished shoulder. Never swan  
Dreamed on the water with a grace so calm !

ISIDORE.

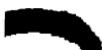
And was she proud, sir?

LORD IVON.

Or I had not loved her.

ISIDORE.

Then runs my lesson wrong. I ever read  
Pride was unlovely.



## LORD IVON.

Dost thou prate already  
Of books, my little one? Nay, then, 'tis time  
That a sad tale were told thee. Is thy bird  
Fed for the day? Canst thou forget the rein  
Of thy beloved Arabian for an hour,  
And, the first time in all thy sunny life,  
Take sadness to thy heart? Wilt listen, sweet?

## ISIDORE.

Hang I not ever on thy lips, dear father?

## LORD IVON.

As thou didst enter, I was musing here  
Upon this picture. 'Tis the face of one  
I never knew; but, for its glorious pride,  
I bought it of the painter. There has hung  
Ever the cunning curse upon my soul  
To love this look in woman. Not the flower  
Of all Arcadia, in the Age of Gold,  
*Look'd* she a shepherdess, would be to me

More than the birds are. As th' astrologer  
Worships the half-seen star that in its sphere  
Dreams not of him, and tramples on the lily  
That flings, unask'd, its fragrance in his way,  
Yet both (as are the high-born and the low)  
Wrought of the same fine Hand—so, daringly,  
Flew my boy-hopes beyond me. You are here  
In a brave palace, Isidore ! The gem  
That sparkles in your hair imprisons light  
Drunk in the flaming Orient ; and gold  
Waits on the bidding of those girlish lips  
In measure that Aladdin never knew  
Yet was I—lowly born !

## ISIDORE.

Lord Ivon !

## LORD IVON.

Ay,

You wonder ; but I tell you that the Lord  
Of this tall palace was a peasant's child !



And, looking sometimes on his fair domain,  
Thy sire bethinks him of a sickly boy,  
Nursed by his mother on a mountain side,  
His only wealth a book of poetry,  
With which he daily crept into the sun,  
To cheat sharp pains with the bewildering dream  
Of beauty he had only read of there

## ISIDORE.

Have you the volume still, sir?

## LORD IVON.

'Twas the gift  
Of a poor scholar, wandering in the hills,  
Who pitied my sick idleness. I fed  
My inmost soul upon the witching rhyme—  
A silly tale of a low minstrel boy,  
Who broke his heart in singing at a bridal.

## ISIDORE.

Loved he the lady, sir?



LORD IVON.

So ran the tale.

How well I do remember it !

ISIDORE.

Alas !

Poor youth !

LORD IVON.

I never thought to *pity* him.

The bride was a duke's sister ; and I mused  
Upon the wonder of his daring love,  
Till my heart changed within me. I became  
Restless and sad ; and in my sleep I saw  
Beautiful dames all scornfully go by ;  
And one o'er-weary morn I crept away  
Into the glen, and, flung upon a rock,  
Over a torrent whose swift, giddy waters  
Fill'd me with energy, I swore my soul  
To better that false vision, if there were  
Manhood or fire within my wretched frame.

I turn'd me homeward with the sunset hour,  
Changed—for the thought had conquer'd ev'n disease ;  
And my poor mother check'd her busy wheel,  
To wonder at the step with which I came.

Oh, heavens ! that soft and dewy April eve,  
When, in a minstrel's garb, but with a heart  
As lofty as the marble shafts upreared  
Beneath the stately portico, I stood  
At this same palace door !

## ISIDORE.

Our own ! and you  
A minstrel boy !

## LORD IVON.

Yes—I had wandered far  
Since I shook off my sickness in the hills,  
And, with some cunning on the lute, had learn'd  
A subtler lesson than humility  
In the quick school of want. A menial stood

By the Egyptian sphinx ; and when I came  
And pray'd to sing beneath the balcony  
A song of love for a fair lady's ear,  
He insolently bade me to begone.  
Listening not, I swept my fingers o'er  
The strings in prelude, when the base-born slave  
Struck me !

## ISIDORE.

Impossible !

## LORD IVON.

I dash'd my lute  
Into his face, and o'er the threshold flew ;  
And, threading rapidly the lofty rooms,  
Sought vainly for his master. Suddenly  
A wing rushed o'er me, and a radiant girl,  
Young as myself, but fairer than the dream  
Of my most wild imagining, sprang forth,  
Chasing a dove, that, 'wilder'd with pursuit,  
Dropt breathless on my bosom,

ISIDORE.

Nay, dear father !

Was't so indeed ?

LORD IVON.

I thank'd my blessed star !

And, as the fair, transcendent creature stood  
Silent with wonder, I resign'd the bird  
To her white hands : and, with a rapid thought,  
And lips already eloquent of love,  
Turn'd the strange chance to a similitude  
Of my own story. Her slight, haughty lip  
Curl'd at the warm recital of my wrong,  
And on the ivory oval of her cheek  
The rose flush'd outward with a deeper red ;  
And from that hour the minstrel was at home,  
And horse and hound were his, and none might cross  
The minion of the noble Lady Clare.  
Art weary of my tale ?

ISIDORE.

Dear father !

LORD IVON.

Well!

A summer, and a winter, and a spring,  
Went over me like brief and noteless hours.  
For ever at the side of one who grew  
With every morn more beautiful ; the slave,  
Willing and quick, of every idle whim ;  
Singing for no one's bidding but her own,  
And then a song from my own passionate heart,  
Sung with a lip of fire, but ever named  
As an old rhyme that I had chanced to hear ;  
Riding beside her, sleeping at her door,  
Doing her maddest bidding at the risk  
Of life—what marvel if at last I grew  
Presumptuous ?

A messenger one morn  
Spurr'd through the gate—" A revel at the court !  
And many minstrels, come from many lands,  
Will try their harps in presence of the king ;  
And 'tis the royal pleasure that my lord

Come with the young and lovely Lady Clare,  
Rob'd as the Queen of Faery, who shall crown  
The victor with his bays."

Pass over all  
To that bewildering day. She sat enthroned  
Amid the court ; and never twilight star  
Sprang with such sweet surprise upon the eye  
As she with her rare beauty on the gaze  
Of the gay multitude. The minstrels changed  
Their studied songs, and chose her for a theme ;  
And ever at the pause all eyes upturn'd  
And fed upon her loveliness.

The last  
Long lay was ended, and the silent crowd  
Waited the king's award—when suddenly  
The sharp strings of a lyre were swept without,  
And a clear voice claim'd hearing for a bard  
Belated on his journey. Mask'd, and clad  
In a long stole, the herald led me in,

A thousand eyes were on me: but I saw  
The new-throned queen, in her high place, alone;  
And, kneeling at her feet, I pressed my brow  
Upon her footstool, till the images  
Of my past hours rush'd thick upon my brain;  
Then, rising hastily, I struck my lyre;  
And, in a story woven of my own,  
I so did paint her in her loveliness—  
Pouring my heart all out upon the lines  
I knew too faithfully, and lavishing  
The hoarded fire of a whole age of love  
Upon each passionate word, that, as I sunk  
Exhausted at the close, the ravish'd crowd  
Flung gold and flowers on my still quivering lyre;  
And the moved monarch in his gladness swore  
There was no boon beneath his kingly crown  
Too high for such a minstrel!

Did my star  
Speak in my fainting ear? Heard I the king?  
Or did the audible pulses of my heart

Seem to me so articulate? I rose,  
And tore my mask away; and, as the stole  
Dropped from my shoulders, I glanced hurriedly  
A look upon the face of Lady Clare.  
It was enough! I saw that she was changed—  
That a brief hour had chilled the open child  
To calculating woman—that she read  
With cold displeasure my o'er-daring thought;  
And on that brow, to me as legible  
As stars to the rapt Arab, I could trace  
The scorn that waited on me! Sick of life,  
Yet, even then, with a half-rallied hope  
Prompting my faltering tongue, I blindly knelt,  
And claimed the king's fair promise—

## ISIDORE.

For the hand  
Of Lady Clare?

## LORD IVON.

No, sweet one—for a sword.

ISIDORE.

You surely spoke to her ?

LORD IVON.

I saw her face  
No more for years. I went unto the wars ;  
And when again I sought that palace door,  
A glory heralded the minstrel boy  
That monarchs might have envied.

ISIDORE.

Was she there ?

LORD IVON.

Yes—and, O God ! how beautiful ! The last,  
The ripest seal of loveliness, was set  
Upon her form ; and the all-glorious pride  
That I had worshipped on her girlish lip,  
When her scared dove fled to me, was matured  
Into a queenly grace ; and nobleness  
Was bound like a tiara to her brow,



And every motion breathed of it. There lived  
Nothing on earth so ravishingly fair.

## ISIDORE.

And you still lov'd her ?

## LORD IVON.

I had perill'd life  
In every shape—had battled on the sea,  
And burnt upon the desert, and outgone  
Spirits most mad for glory, with this one  
O'ermastering hope upon me. Honour, fame,  
Gold, even, were as dust beneath my feet ;  
And war was my disgust, though I had sought  
Its horrors like a bloodhound—for her praise.  
My life was drunk up with the love of her.

## ISIDORE.

And now she scorn'd you not ?

## LORD IVON.

Worse, Isidore !

She pitied me ! I did not need a voice  
To tell my love. She knew her sometime minion—  
And felt that she should never be adored  
With such idolatry as his, and sighed  
That hearts so true beat not in palaces—  
But I was poor, with all my bright renown,  
And lowly born ; and she—the Lady Clare !

## ISIDORE.

She could not tell you this ?

## LORD IVON.

She broke my heart  
As kindly as the fisher hooks the worm—  
Pitying me the while !

## ISIDORE.

And you—

## LORD IVON.

Lived on !

But the remembrance irks me, and my throat  
Chokes with the utterance !



ISIDORE.

Dear father !

LORD IVON.

Nay—

Thanks to sweet Mary Mother, it is past :  
And in this world I shall have no more need  
To speak of it.

ISIDORE.

But there were brighter days  
In store. My mother, and this palace—

LORD IVON.

You outrun  
My tale, dear Isidore ! But 'tis as well.  
I would not linger on it.

Twenty years

From this heart-broken hour, I stood again  
An old man and a stranger, at the door

Of this same palace. I had been a slave  
For gold that time. My star had wrought with me !  
And I was richer than the wizard king  
Throned in the mines of Ind. I could not look  
On my innumerable gems, the glare  
Pained so my sun-struck eyes. My gold was count-  
less.

## ISIDORE.

And Lady Clare ?

## LORD IVON.

I met upon the threshold  
Her very self—all youth, all loveliness—  
So like the fresh-kept picture in my brain,  
That for a moment I forgot all else,  
And stagger'd back and wept. She passed me by  
With a cold look—

## ISIDORE.

Oh ! not the Lady Clare !

## LORD IVON.

Her daughter yet herself ! But what a change  
Waited me here ! My thin and grizzled locks  
Were fairer now than the young minstrel's curls ;  
My sun-burnt visage and contracted eye  
Than the gay soldier in his gallant mien ;  
My words were wit, my looks interpreted,  
And Lady Clare—I tell you, Lady Clare  
Leaned fondly—fondly ! on my wasted arm.  
O God ! how changed my nature with all this !  
I, that had been all love and tenderness,—  
The truest and most gentle heart, till now,  
That ever beat—grew suddenly a devil !  
I bought me lands, and titles, and received  
Men's homage with a smooth hypocrisy ;  
And—you will scarce believe me, Isidore—  
I suffered them to wile their peerless daughter,  
The image and the pride of Lady Clare,  
To wed me !

## ISIDORE.

Sir ! you did not !

---

## LORD IVON.

Ay ! I saw

Th' indignant anger when her mother first  
Broke the repulsive wish, and the degrees  
Of shuddering reluctance as her mind  
Admitted the intoxicating tales  
Of wealth unlimited. And when she look'd  
On my age-stricken features, and my form,  
Wasted before its time, and turned away  
To hide from me her tears, her very mother  
Whispered the cursed comfort in her ear  
That made her what she is !

## ISIDORE.

You could not wed her,

Knowing all this !

## LORD IVON.

I felt that I had lost

My life else. I had wrung, for forty years,  
My frame to its last withers ; I had flung

My boyhood s fire away—the energy  
Of a most sinless youth—the toil, and fret,  
And agony of manhood. I had dared,  
Fought, suffered, slaved—and never for an hour  
Forgot or swerved from my resolve ; and now—  
With the delirious draught upon my lips—  
Dash down the cup !

## ISIDORE.

Yet *she* had never wrong'd you !

## LORD IVON.

Thou'rt pleading for thy mother, my sweet child !  
And angels hear thee. But if she was wrong'd,  
The sin be on the pride that sells its blood  
Coldly and only for this damning gold.  
Had I not offered youth first ? Came I not  
With my hands brimm'd with glory to buy love—  
And was I not denied ?

## ISIDORE.

Yet, dearest father,  
They forced her not to wed ?

## LORD IVON.

I called her back  
Myself from the church threshold, and, before.  
Her mother and her kinsmen, bade her swear  
It was her own free choice to marry me.  
I showed her my shrunk hand, and bade her think  
If that was like a bridegroom, and beware  
Of perjuring her chaste and spotless soul,  
If now she loved me not.

## ISIDORE.

What said she, sir ?

## LORD IVON.

Oh ! they had made her even as themselves ;  
And her young heart was colder than the slab  
Unsunnd beneath Pentelicus. She pressed  
My withered fingers in her dewy clasp,  
And smiled up in my face, and chid " my lord "  
For his wild fancies, and led on !

**ISIDORE.**

And no

Misgiving at the altar?

**LORD IVON.**

None! She swore

To love and cherish me till death should part us,  
With a voice clear as mine.

**ISIDORE.**

And kept it, father!

In mercy tell me so!

**LORD IVON.**

*She lives, my daughter!*

\* \* \* \* \*

Long ere my babe was born, my pride had ebb'd,  
And let my heart down to its better founts  
Of tenderness. I had no friends—not one!  
My love gush'd to my wife. I rack'd my brain

To find her a new pleasure every hour—  
Yet not with me—I fear'd to haunt her eye !  
Only at night, when she was slumbering  
In all her beauty, I would put away  
The curtains till the pale night-lamp shone on her,  
And watch her through my tears.

One night her lips  
Parted as I gazed on them, and the name  
Of a young noble, who had been my guest,  
Stole forth in broken murmurs. I let fall  
The curtains silently, and left her there  
To slumber and dream on ; and gliding forth  
Upon the terrace, knelt to my pale star,  
And swore, that if it pleased the God of light  
To let me look upon the unborn child  
Lying beneath her heart, I would but press  
One kiss upon its lips, and take away  
The life that was a blight upon her years.

**ISIDORE:**

**was that child !**

## LORD IVON.

Yes—and I heard the cry  
Of thy small “ piping mouth ” as ’twere a call  
From my remembering star. I waited only  
Thy mother’s strength to bear the common shock  
Of death within the doors. She rose at last,  
And, oh ! so sweetly pale ! And thou, my child !  
My heart misgave me as I looked upon thee ;  
But he was ever at her side whose name  
She murmur’d in her sleep ; and, lingering on  
To drink a little of thy sweetness more  
Before I died, I watched their stolen love  
As she had been my daughter, with a pure,  
Passionless joy that I should leave her soon  
To love him as she would. I know not how  
To tell thee more. \* \* \* \*

\* \* \* Come, sweet ! she is not worthy  
Of tears like thine and mine. \* \* \*

\* \* \* \* She fled and left me  
The very night ! The poison was prepared—  
And she had been a widow with the morn

Rich as Golconda. As the midnight chimed  
My star rose. Gazing on its mounting orb,  
I raised the chalice—but a weakness came  
Over my heart ; and, taking up the lamp,  
I glided to her chamber, and remov'd  
The curtains for a last, a parting look  
Upon my child. \* \* \* \*  
\* \* \* \* Had she but taken thee,  
I could have felt she had a mother's heart,  
And drain'd the chalice still. I could not leave  
My babe alone in such a heartless world !

## ISIDORE.

Thank God ! Thank God !

**BIRTH-DAY VERSES.**

---

"The heart we have lain near before our birth is the only one that cannot forget  
that it has loved us."

PHILIP SLINGSBY.

---

My birthday!—Oh beloved mother!  
My heart is with thee o'er the seas.  
I did not think to count another  
Before I wept upon thy knees—  
Before this scroll of absent years  
Was blotted with thy streaming tears.

My own I do not care to check.  
I weep—albeit here alone—

As if I hung upon thy neck,  
As if thy lips were on my own,  
As if this full, sad heart of mine,  
Were beating closely upon thine.

Four weary years ! How looks she now ?  
What light is in those tender eyes ?  
What trace of time has touch'd the brow  
Whose look is borrow'd of the skies  
That listen to her nightly prayer ?  
How is she changed since *he* was there  
Who sleeps upon her heart alway—  
Whose name upon her lips is worn —  
For whom the night seems made to pray—  
For whom she wakes to pray at morn—  
Whose sight is dim, whose heart-strings stir,  
Who weeps these tears—to think of *her* !

I know not if my mother's eyes  
Would find me chang'd in slighter things ;

I've wandered beneath many skies,  
And tasted of some bitter springs ;  
And many leaves, once fair and gay,  
From youth's full flower have dropp'd away—  
But, as these looser leaves depart,  
The lessen'd flower gets near the core,  
And, when deserted quite, the heart  
Takes closer what was dear of yore—  
And yearns to those who lov'd it first—  
The sunshine and the dew by which its bud was nurst.

Dear mother ! dost thou love me yet ?  
Am I remember'd in my home ?  
When those I love for joy are met,  
Does some one wish that I would come ?  
Thou *dost*—I *am* belov'd of these !  
But, as the schoolboy numbers o'er  
Night after night the Pleiades,  
And finds the stars he found before,  
As turns the maiden oft her token,  
As counts the miser aye his gold—

So, till life's silver chord is broken,  
Would I of thy fond love be told.  
My heart is full, mine eyes are wet—  
Dear mother! dost thou love thy long-lost wanderer  
yet?

Oh ! when the hour to meet again  
Creeps on, and, speeding o'er the sea,  
My heart takes up its lengthen'd chain,  
And, link by link, draws nearer thee—  
When land is hailed, and, from the shore,  
Comes off the blessed breath of home,  
With fragrance from my mother's door  
Of flowers forgotten when I come—  
When port is gain'd, and, slowly now,  
The old, familiar paths are past,  
And, entering, unconscious how,  
I gaze upon thy face at last,  
And run to thee, all faint and weak,  
And feel thy tears upon my cheek—  
Oh ! if my heart break not with joy,

The light of heaven will fairer seem;  
And I shall grow once more a boy:  
And, mother!—'twill be like a dream  
That we were parted thus for years—  
And, once that we have dried our tears,  
How will the days seem long and bright—  
To meet thee always with the morn,  
And hear thy blessing every night—  
Thy “dearest,” thy “first-born!”—  
And be no more, as now, in a strange land, forlorn!

*London, Jan. 20th, 1825.*

**FLORENCE GRAY.**

---

I WAS in Greece. It was the hour of noon,  
And the Egean wind had dropp'd asleep  
Upon Hymettus, and the thymy isles  
Of Salamis and Egina lay hung  
Like clouds upon the bright and breathless sea.  
I had climb'd up th'Acropolis at morn,  
And hours had fled as time will in a dream  
Amid its deathless ruins—for the air  
Is full of spirits in these mighty fanes,  
And they walk with you ! As it sultrier grew,  
I laid me down within a shadow deep  
Of a tall column of the Parthenon,  
And, in an absent idleness of thought,

I scrawl'd upon the smooth and marble base.  
Tell me, O memory, what wrote I there ?  
*The name of a sweet child I knew at Rome !*

I was in Asia. 'Twas a peerless night  
Upon the plains of Sardis, and the moon,  
Touching my eyelids through the wind-stirr'd tent,  
Had witch'd me from my slumber. I arose  
And silently stole forth, and by the brink  
Of "golden Pactolus," where bathe his waters  
The bases of Cybele's columns fair,  
I paced away the hours. In wakeful mood  
I mused upon the storied past awhile,  
Watching the moon, that with the same mild eye  
Had looked upon the mighty Lydian kings  
Sleeping around me—Crœsus, who had heap'd  
Within that mouldering portico his gold,  
And Gyges, buried with his viewless ring  
Beneath yon swelling tumulus—and then  
I loitered up the valley to a small

And humbler ruin, where the undefiled \*  
Of the Apocalypse their garments kept  
Spotless ; and crossing with a conscious awe  
The broken threshold, to my spirit's eye  
It seem'd as if, amid the moonlight, stood  
“ The angel of the church of Sardis ” still !  
And I again pass'd onward, and as dawn  
Paled the bright morning star, I laid me down  
Weary and sad beside the river's brink,  
And 'twixt the moonlight and the rosy morn,  
Wrote with my finger in the “ golden sands.”  
Tell me, O memory, what wrote I there ?  
*The name of the sweet child I knew at Rome !*

The dust is old upon my “ sandal-shoon,”  
And still I am a pilgrim ; I have roved  
From wild America to spicy Ind,

\* “ Thou hast a few names even in Sardis which have not defiled their garments : and they shall walk with me in white : for they are worthy.”—Revelation iii. 4.

And worshipp'd at innumerable shrines  
Of beauty ; and the painter's art, to me,  
And sculpture, speak as with a living tongue,  
And of dead kingdoms I recal the soul,  
Sitting amid their ruins. I have stored  
My memory with thoughts that can allay  
Fever and sadness, and when life gets dim,  
And I am overladen in my years,  
Minister to me. But when wearily  
The mind gives over toiling, and, with eyes  
Open but seeing not, and senses all  
Lying awake within their chambers dim,  
Thought settles like a fountain, still and clear—  
Far in its sleeping depths, as 'twere a gem,  
Tell me, O memory, what shines so fair?  
*The face of the sweet child I knew at Rome !*

TO —

---

“ The desire of the moth for the star—  
    Of the night for the morrow—  
The devotion to something afar  
    From the sphere of our sorrow.”

SHELLEY.

“ L’alma, quel che non ha, sogna e figura.”

METASTASIO.

---

As, gazing on the Pleiades,  
    We count each fair and starry one,  
Yet wander from the light of these  
    To muse upon the Pleiad gone—  
As, bending o'er fresh gather'd flowers,  
    The rose's most enchanting hue  
Reminds us but of other hours  
    Whose roses were all lovely too—

---

So, dearest, when I rove among  
The bright ones of this foreign sky,  
And mark the smile, and list the song,  
And watch the dancers gliding by,  
The fairer still they seem to be,  
The more it stirs a thought of thee !

The sad, sweet bells of twilight chime,  
Of many hearts may touch but one,  
And so this seeming careless rhyme  
Will whisper to thy heart alone.  
I give it to the winds ! The bird,  
Let loose, to his far nest will flee,  
And love, though breathed but on a word,  
Will find thee, over land and sea.  
Though clouds across the sky have driven,  
We trust the star at last will shine,  
And like the very light of heaven  
I trust thy love. *Trust thou in mine !*

TO —

---

“ Oh, by that little word  
How many thoughts are stirr'd !—  
The last, the last, the last !”

---

THE star may but a meteor be,  
That breaks upon the stormy night ;  
And I may err, believing thee  
A spark of heaven's own changeless light !  
But if on earth beams aught so fair,  
It seems, of all the lights that shine,  
Serenest in its truth, 'tis there,  
Burning in those soft eyes of thine.  
Yet long-watch'd stars from heaven have rush'd,  
And long-lov'd friends have dropp'd away,  
And mine—my very heart have crush'd !  
And I have hop'd, this many a day,

It liv'd no more for love or pain !  
But thou hast stirr'd its depths again,  
    And, to its dull, out-wearied ear,  
Thy voice of melody has crept,  
    In tones it cannot choose but hear ;  
And now I feel it only slept,  
    And know, at ev'n thy lightest smile,  
It gathered fire and strength the while.

Fail me not thou ! This feeling past,  
    My heart would never rouse again.  
Thou art the brightest—but the last !  
    And if *this* trust, *this* love is vain—  
If thou, all peerless as thou art,  
    Be not less fair than true of heart—  
My loves are o'er ! The sun will shine  
Jpon no grave so hush'd as this dark breast of mine.

### THE CONFESSORIAL

---

" When thou hast met with careless hearts and cold,  
Hearts that young love may touch, but never hold  
Not changeless, as the loved and left of old—  
Remember me—remember me—  
I passionately pray of thee !"

LADY E. S. WORTLEY.

---

I THOUGHT of thee—I thought of thee,  
On ocean—many a weary night—  
When heaved the long and sullen sea,  
With only waves and stars in sight.  
We stole along by isles of balm,  
We furl'd before the coming gale,  
We slept amid the breathless calm,  
We flew beneath the straining sail—  
But thou wert lost for years to me,  
And, day and night, I thought of thee !



I thought of thee—I thought of thee,  
In France—amid the gay saloon,  
Where eyes as dark as eyes may be  
Are many as the leaves in June—  
Where life is love, and ev'n the air  
Is pregnant with impassion'd thought,  
And song and dance and music are  
With one warm meaning only fraught—  
My half-snar'd heart broke lightly free,  
And, with a blush, I thought of thee !

I thought of thee—I thought of thee,  
In Florence,—where the fiery hearts  
Of Italy are breathed away  
In wonders of the deathless arts ;  
Where strays the Contadina down  
Val d'Arno with a song of old ;  
Where clime and woman seldom frown,  
And life runs over sands of gold ;  
I stray'd to lone Fiesolé  
On many an eve, and thought of thee.

I thought of thee—I thought of thee,  
In Rome,—when on the Palatine  
Night left the Cæsar's palace free  
To Time's forgetful foot and mine ;  
Or, on the Coliseum's wall,  
When moonlight touch'd the ivied stone,  
Reclining, with a thought of all  
That o'er this scene has come and gone—  
The shades of Rome would start and flee  
Unconsciously—I thought of thee.

I thought of thee—I thought of thee,  
'In Vallombrosa's holy shade,  
Where nobles born the friars be,  
By life's rude changes humbler made.  
Here Milton fram'd his Paradise ;  
I slept within his very cell;  
And, as I clos'd my weary eyes,  
I thought the cowl would fit me well—  
The cloisters breath'd, it seem'd to me,  
Of heart's-ease—but I thought of thee.

I thought of thee—I thought of thee,  
In Venice,—on a night in June ;  
When, through the city of the sea,  
Like dust of silver slept the moon.  
Slow turn'd his oar the gondolier,  
And, as the black barks glided by,  
The water to my leaning ear  
Bore back the lover's passing sigh—  
It was no place alone to be—  
I thought of thee—I thought of thee.

I thought of thee—I thought of thee,  
In the Ionian Isles—when straying  
With wise Ulysses by the sea—  
Old Homer's songs around me playing ;  
Or, watching the bewitched caique,  
That o'er the star-lit waters flew,  
I listen'd to the helmsman Greek,  
Who sung the song that Sappho knew—  
The poet's spell, the bark, the sea,  
All vanished—as I thought of thee.

I thought of thee—I thought of thee,  
In Greece—when rose the Parthenon  
Majestic o'er the Egean sea,  
And heroes with it, one by one ;  
When, in the grove of Academe,  
Where Lais and Leontium stray'd  
Discussing Plato's mystic theme,  
I lay at noontide in the shade—  
The Egean wind, the whispering tree,  
Had voices—and I thought of thee.

I thought of thee—I thought of thee,  
In Asia—on the Dardanelles ;  
Where, swiftly as the waters flee,  
Each wave some sweet old story tells ;  
And, seated by the marble tank  
Which sleeps by Ilium's ruins old,  
(The fount where peerless Helen drank,  
And Venus lav'd her locks of gold,\*)

\* In the Scamander,—before contending for the prize of beauty on Mount Ida. Its head waters fill a beautiful tank near the walls of Troy.

I thrill'd such classic haunts to see,  
Yet even here—I thought of thee.

I thought of thee—I thought of thee,  
Where glide the Bosphor's lovely waters,  
All palace-lined, from sea to sea ;  
And ever on its shores the daughters  
Of the delicious East are seen,  
Printing the brink with slipper'd feet,  
And oh, those snowy folds between,  
What eyes of heaven your glances meet !  
Peris of light no fairer be—  
Yet—in Stamboul—I thought of thee.

I've thought of thee—I've thought of thee,  
Through change that teaches to forget ;  
Thy face looks up from every sea,  
In every star thine eyes are set,  
Though roving beneath Orient skies,  
Whose golden beauty breathes of rest,



I envy every bird that flies  
Into the far and clouded West :  
I think of thee—I think of thee !  
Oh, dearest ! hast thou thought of me ?

**END OF PART I.**

## PART II.

INSCRIBED TO CHARLES OTLEY, ESQ.

OF FLORENCE.



### THE DYING ALCHYMIST.

---

THE night wind with a desolate moan swept by,  
And the old shutters of the turret swung  
Screaming upon their hinges, and the moon,  
As the torn edges of the clouds flew past,  
Struggled aslant the stained and broken panes  
So dimly, that the watchful eye of death  
Scarcely was conscious when it went and came.

\* \* \* \* \*

The fire beneath his crucible was low ;  
Yet still it burned, and ever as his thoughts  
Grew insupportable, he raised himself  
Upon his wasted arm, and stirred the coals  
With difficult energy, and when the rod

Fell from his nerveless fingers, and his eye  
Felt faint within its socket, he shrunk back  
Upon his pallet, and with unclosed lips  
Muttered a curse on death ! The silent room  
From its dim corners mockingly gave back  
His rattling breath ; the humming in the fire  
Had the distinctness of a knell, and when  
Duly the antique horologe beat one,  
He drew a phial from beneath his head,  
And drank. And instantly his lips compressed,  
And with a shudder in his skeleton frame,  
He rose with supernatural strength, and sat  
Upright, and communed with himself :—

I did not think to die  
Till I had finished what I had to do ;  
I thought to pierce th' eternal secret through  
With this my mortal eye ;  
I felt—Oh God ! it seemeth even now  
This cannot be the death-dew on my brow.



And yet it is—I feel  
Of this dull sickness at my heart afraid ;  
And in my eyes the death-sparks flash and fade ;  
    And something seems to steal  
Over my bosom like a frozen hand,  
Binding its pulses with an icy band.

And this is death ! But why  
Feel I this wild recoil ? It cannot be  
Th' immortal spirit shuddereth to be free !  
    Would it not leap to fly,  
Like a chain'd eaglet at its parent's call ?  
I fear—I fear that this poor life is all !

Yet thus to pass away !—  
To live but for a hope that mocks at last—  
To agonize, to strive, to watch, to fast,  
    To waste the light of day,  
Night's better beauty, feeling, fancy, thought,  
All that we have and are—for this—for nought !

Grant me another year,  
God of my spirit !—but a day—to win  
Something to satisfy this thirst within !  
I would know something here !  
Break for me but one seal that is unbroken !  
Speak for me but one word that is unspoken !

Vain—vain !—my brain is turning  
With a swift dizziness, and my heart grows sick,  
And these hot temple-throbs come fast and thick,  
And I am freezing—burning—  
Dying ! Oh God ! if I might only live !—  
My phial—Ha ! it thrills me—I revive.

\* \* \* \* \*

Ay—were not man to die  
He were too glorious for this narrow sphere !  
Had he but time to brood on knowledge here—  
Could he but train his eye—

Might he but wait the mystic word and hour—  
Only his Maker would transcend his power !

Earth has no mineral strange—  
Th' illimitable air no hidden wings—  
Water no quality in its covert springs,  
And fire no power to change—  
Seasons no mystery, and stars no spell,  
Which the unwasting soul might not compel.

Oh, but for time to track  
The upper stars into the pathless sky—  
To see th' invisible spirits, eye to eye—  
To hurl the lightning back—  
To tread unhurt the sea's dim-lighted halls—  
To chase Day's chariot to the horizon-walls—

And more, much more—for now  
The life-seal'd fountains of my nature move—  
To nurse and purify this human love—

To clear the god-like brow  
Of weakness and mistrust, and bow it down,  
Worthy and beautiful, to the much-loved one—

This were indeed to feel  
The soul-thirst slaken at the living stream—  
To live—Oh God ! that life is but a dream !  
And death—Aha ! I reel—  
Dim—dim—I faint—darkness comes o'er my eye—  
Cover me ! save me !—God of heaven ! I die !

'Twas morning, and the old man lay alone.  
No friend had closed his eyelids, and his lips,  
Open and ashy pale, th' expression wore  
Of his death-struggle. His long silvery hair  
Lay on his hollow temples thin and wild,  
His frame was wasted, and his features wan  
And haggard as with want, and in his palm  
His nails were driven deep, as if the throes  
Of the last agony had wrung him sore.



The storm was raging still. The shutters swung  
Screaming as harshly in the fitful wind,  
And all without went on—as aye it will,  
Sunshine or tempest, reckless that a heart  
Is breaking, or has broken in its change.

The fire beneath the crucible was out ;  
The vessels of his mystic art lay round,  
Useless and cold as the ambitious hand  
That fashioned them, and the small silver rod,  
Familiar to his touch for threescore years,  
Lay on th' alembic's rim, as if it still  
Might vex the elements at its master's will.

And thus had passed from its unequal frame  
A soul of fire—a sun-bent eagle stricken  
From his high soaring down—an instrument  
Broken with its own compass. Oh how poor  
Seems the rich gift of genius, when it lies,

Like the adventurous bird that hath out-flown  
His strength upon the sea, ambition-wrecked—  
A thing the thrush might pity, as she sits  
Brooding in quiet on her lowly nest.

---

### THE LEPER.

---

“ Room for the leper ! Room ! ” And, as he came,  
The cry passed on—“ Room for the leper ! Room ! ”  
Sunrise was slanting on the city gates  
Rosy and beautiful, and from the hills  
The early risen poor were coming in  
Duly and cheerfully to their toil, and up  
Rose the sharp hammer’s clink, and the far hum  
Of moving wheels and multitudes astir,  
And all that in a city murmur swells,  
Unheard but by the watcher’s weary ear,  
Aching with night’s dull silence, or the sick  
Hailing the welcome light, and sounds that chase  
The death-like images of the dark away.

“ Room for the leper !” And aside they stood—  
Matron, and child, and pitiless manhood—all  
Who met him on his way—and let him pass.  
And onward through the open gate he came,  
A leper with the ashes on his brow,  
Sackcloth about his loins, and on his lip  
A covering, stepping painfully and slow,  
And with a difficult utterance, like one  
Whose heart is with an iron nerve put down,  
Crying “ Unclean ! Unclean !”

’Twas now the first  
Of the Judean Autumn, and the leaves  
Whose shadows lay so still upon his path,  
Had put their beauty forth beneath the eye  
Of Judah’s loftiest noble. He was young,  
And eminently beautiful, and life  
Mantled in eloquent fulness on his lip,  
And sparkled in his glance, and in his mien  
There was a gracious pride that every eye  
Followed with benisons—and this was he !

With the soft airs of Summer there had come  
A torpor on his frame, which not the speed  
Of his best barb, nor music, nor the blast  
Of the bold huntsman's horn, nor aught that stirs  
The spirit to its bent, might drive away.  
The blood beat not as wont within his veins ;  
Dimness crept o'er hie eye ; a drowsy sloth  
Fetter'd his limbs like palsy, and his mien  
With all its loftiness, seemed struck with eld.  
Even his voice was changed—a languid moan  
Taking the place of the clear, silver key ;  
And brain and sense grew faint, as if the light,  
And very air, were steeped in sluggishness.  
He strove with it awhile, as manhood will,  
Ever too proud for weakness, till the rein  
Slackened within his grasp, and in its poise  
The arrowy jereed like an aspen shook.  
Day after day, he lay, as if in sleep.  
His skin grew dry and bloodless, and white scales  
Circled with livid purple, cover'd him.  
And then his nails grew black, and fell away

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From the dull flesh about them, and the hues  
Deepened beneath the hard unmoistened scales,  
And from their edges grew the rank white hair,  
—And Helon was a leper !

Day was breaking

When at the altar of the temple stood  
The holy priest of God. The incense lamp  
Burned with a struggling light, and a low chaunt  
Swelled through the hollow arches of the roof  
Like an articulate wail, and there, alone,  
Wasted to ghastly thinness, Helon knelt.  
The echoes of the melancholy strain  
Died in the distant aisles, and he rose up,  
Struggling with weakness, and bowed down his head  
Unto the sprinkled ashes, and put off  
His costly raiment for the leper's garb,  
And with the sackcloth round him, and his lip  
Hid in a loathsome covering, stood still  
Waiting to hear his doom :—

Depart ! depart, O child  
Of Israel, from the temple of thy God !  
For He has smote thee with his chastening rod,  
And to the desert-wild,  
From all thou lov'st away thy feet must flee,  
That from thy plague His people may be free.

Depart ! and come not near  
The busy mart, the crowded city, more ;  
Nor set thy foot a human threshold o'er ;  
And stay thou not to hear  
Voices that call thee in the way ; and fly  
From all who in the wilderness pass by.

Wet not thy burning lip  
In streams that to a human dwelling glide ;  
Nor rest thee where the covert fountains hide ;  
Nor kneel thee down to dip  
The water where the pilgrim bends to drink,  
By desert well, or river's grassy brink.

From my waked spirit airily and swift,  
And I could paint the bow  
Upon the bended heavens—around me play  
Colours of such divinity to-day.

Ha ! bind him on his back !  
Look ! as Prometheus in my picture here !  
Quick—or he faints !—stand with the cordial near !  
Now—bend him to the rack !  
Press down the poison'd links into his flesh !  
And tear agape that healing wound afresh !

So—let him writhe ! How long  
Will he live thus ? Quick, my good pencil, now !  
What a fine agony works upon his brow !  
Ha ! gray-haired, and so strong !  
How fearfully he stifles that short moan !  
Gods ! if I could but paint a dying groan !

‘ Pity ’ thee ! So I do !  
I pity the dumb victim at the altar—



But does the rob'd priest for his *pity* falter?  
I'd rack thee though I knew  
A thousand lives were perishing in thine—  
What were ten thousand to a fame like mine?

“Hereafter!” Ay—*hereafter*!  
A whip to keep a coward to his track!  
What gave Death ever from his kingdom back  
To check the sceptic's laughter?  
Come from the grave to-morrow with that story,  
And I may take some softer path to glory.

No, no, old man! we die  
Ev'n as the flowers, and we shall breathe away  
Our life upon the chance wind, ev'n as they!  
Strain well thy fainting eye—  
For when that bloodshot quivering is o'er,  
The light of heaven will never reach thee more.

Yet there's a deathless *name*!  
A spirit that the smothering vault shall spurn,

And like a steadfast planet mount and burn—

And though its crown of flame

Consumed my brain to ashes as it shone,

By all the fiery stars ! I'd bind it on !

Ay—though it bid me rifle

My heart's last fount for its insatiate thirst—

Though every life-strung nerve be maddened first—

Though it should bid me stifle

The yearning in my throat for my sweet child,

And taunt its mother till my brain went wild—

All—I would do it all—

Sooner than die, like a dull worm, to rot—

Thrust foully into the earth to be forgot !

Oh Heavens—but I appal

Your heart, old man ! forgive——ha ! on your lives

Let him not faint !—rack him till he revives !

Vain—vain—give o'er ! His eye

Glazes apace. He does not feel you now—

Stand back ! I'll paint the death-dew on his brow !  
Gods ! if he do not die  
But for *one* moment—one—till I eclipse  
Conception with the scorn of those calm lips !

Shivering ! Hark ! he mutters  
Brokenly now—that was a difficult breath—  
Another ? Wilt thou never come, oh, Death !  
Look ! how his temple flutters !  
Is his heart still ? Aha ! lift up his head !  
He shudders—gasps—Jove help him !—so—he's dead.”

\*       \*       \*       \*

How like a mounting devil in the heart  
Rules the unreined ambition ! Let it once  
But play the monarch, and its haughty brow  
Glow with a beauty that bewilders thought  
And unthrones peace for ever. Putting on  
The very pomp of Lucifer, it turns  
The heart to ashes, and with not a spring  
Left in the bosom for the spirit's lip,  
We look upon our splendour and forget

The thirst of which we perish ! Yet hath life  
Many a falser idol. There are hopes  
Promising well, and love-touch'd dreams for some,  
And passions, many a wild one, and fair schemes  
For gold and pleasure—yet will only this  
Balk not the soul—Ambition only gives  
Even of bitterness a beaker *full!*  
Friendship is but a slow-awaking dream,  
Troubled at best—Love is a lamp unseen,  
Burning to waste, or, if its light is found,  
Nursed for an idle hour, then idly broken—  
Gain is a grovelling care, and Folly tires,  
And Quiet is a hunger never fed—  
And from Love's very bosom, and from Gain,  
Or Folly, or a Friend, or from Repose,  
From all but keen Ambition, will the soul  
Snatch the first moment of forgetfulness  
To wander like a restless child away.

Oh, if there were not better hopes than these—  
Were there no palm beyond a feverish fame—

If the proud wealth flung back upon the heart  
Must canker in its coffers—if the links  
Falsehood hath broken will unite no more—  
If the deep-yearning love that hath not found  
Its like in the cold world, must waste in tears—  
If truth, and fervor, and devotedness,  
Finding no worthy altar, must return  
And die of their own fulness—if beyond  
The grave there is no Heaven in whose wide air  
The spirit may find room, and in the love  
Of whose bright habitants the lavish heart  
May spend itself—*what thrice-mocked fools are we!*

## THE WIFE'S APPEAL.

---

"Love borrows greatly from opinion. Pride above all things strengthens affection."

E. L. BULWER.

---

HE sat and read. A book with silver clasps,  
All gorgeous with illuminated lines  
Of gold and crimson, lay upon a frame  
Before him. 'Twas a volume of old time ;  
And in it were fine mysteries of the stars  
Solved with a cunning wisdom, and strange thoughts,  
Half prophecy, half poetry, and dreams  
Clearer than truth, and speculations wild  
That touched the secrets of your very soul,  
They were so based on Nature. With a face  
Glowing with thought, he pored upon the book.  
The cushions of an Indian loom lay soft  
Beneath his limbs, and, as he turned the page,



The sunlight, streaming through the curtain's fold,  
Fell with a rose-tint on his jewell'd hand,  
And the rich woods of the quaint furniture  
Lay deepening their veined colours in the sun,  
And the stained marbles on the pedestals  
Stood like a silent company—Voltaire,  
With an infernal sneer upon his lips,  
And Socrates, with godlike human love  
Stamped on his countenance, and orators  
Of times gone by that made them, and old bards,  
And Medicean Venus, half divine.  
Around the room were shelves of dainty lore,  
And rich old pictures hung upon the walls  
Where the slant light fell on them ; and wrought gems,  
Medallions, rare mosaics, and antiques  
From Herculaneum, the niches filled.  
And on a table of enamel, wrought  
With a lost art in Italy, there lay  
Prints of fair women, and engravings rare,  
And a new poem, and a costly toy,  
And in their midst a massive lamp of bronze

Burning sweet spices constantly. Asleep  
Upon the carpet couched a graceful hound,  
Of a rare breed, and, as his master gave  
A murmur of delight at some sweet line,  
He raised his slender head, and kept his eye  
Upon him till the pleasant smile had passed  
From his mild lips, and then he slept again.  
The light beyond the crimson folds grew dusk,  
And the clear letters of the pleasant book  
Mingled and blurred, and the lithe hound rose up,  
And, with his earnest eye upon the door,  
Listened attentively. It came as wont—  
The fall of a light foot upon the stair—  
And the fond animal sprang out to meet  
His mistress, and caress the ungloved hand,  
He seemed to know was beautiful. She stooped  
Gracefully down and touched his silken ears  
As she passed in—then, with a tenderness,  
Half playful and half serious, she knelt  
Upon the ottoman and pressed her lips  
Upon her husband's forehead.

\*       \*       \*       \*

She rose and put the curtain-folds aside  
From the high window, and looked out upon  
The shining stars in silence. "Look they not  
Like Paradises to thine eye?" he said—  
But, as he spoke, a tear fell through the light,  
And starting from his seat he folded her  
Close to his heart, and, with unsteady voice,  
Asked if she was not happy. A faint smile  
Broke through her tears; and pushing off the hair  
From his fine forehead, she held back his head  
With her white hand, and, gazing on his face,  
Gave to her heart free utterance:—

Happy?—yes, dearest!—blest  
Beyond the limit of my wildest dream—  
Too bright, indeed, my blessings ever seem;  
There lives not in my breast,  
One of Hope's promises by Love unkept,  
And yet—for me, Ernest—I have wept.

---

And like a steadfast planet mount and burn—  
And though its crown of flame  
Consumed my brain to ashes as it shone,  
By all the fiery stars ! I'd bind it on !

Ay—though it bid me rifle  
My heart's last fount for its insatiate thirst—  
Though every life-strung nerve be maddened first—  
Though it should bid me stifle  
The yearning in my throat for my sweet child,  
And taunt its mother till my brain went wild—

All—I would do it all—  
Sooner than die, like a dull worm, to rot—  
Thrust foully into the earth to be forgot !  
Oh Heavens—but I appal  
Your heart, old man ! forgive —ha ! on your lives  
Let him not faint !—rack him till he revives !

Vain—vain—give o'er ! His eye  
Glazes apace. He does not feel you now—

It is thy life and mine !—  
Thou in thyself, and I in thee, misprison  
Gifts like a circle of bright stars unrisen—  
For thou, whose mind should shine  
Eminent as a planet's light, art here—  
Moved with the starting of a woman's tear !

I have told o'er thy powers  
In secret, as a miser tells his gold ;  
I know thy spirit calm, and true, and bold :  
I've watched thy lightest hours,  
And seen thee, in the wildest flush of youth  
Touched with the instinct ravishment of truth.

Thou hast the secret strange  
To read that hidden book, the human heart ;  
Thou hast the ready writer's practised art ;  
Thou hast the thought to range  
The broadest circles Intellect hath ran—  
And thou art God's best work—an honest man !

And yet thou slumberest here  
Like a caged bird that never knew its pinions,  
And others track in glory the dominions  
Where thou hast not thy peer—  
Setting their weaker eyes unto the sun,  
And plucking honour that thou shouldst have won.

Oh, if thou lov'dst me ever,  
Ernest, my husband ! If th' idolatry  
That lets go heaven to fling its all on thee—  
If to dismiss thee never  
In dream or prayer, have given me aught to claim—  
Heed me—oh, heed me ! and awake to Fame !

#### Her lips

Closed with an earnest sweetness, and she sat  
Gazing into his eyes as if her look  
Searched their dark orbs for answer. The warm blood  
Into his temples mounted, and across  
His countenance the flush of passionate thoughts  
Passed with irresolute quickness. He rose up

And paced the dim room rapidly awhile,  
Calming his troubled mind, and then he came  
And laid his hand upon her orbéd brow,  
And in a voice of heavenly tenderness  
Answered her :—

Before I knew thee, 'Mary,  
Ambition was my angel. I did hear  
For ever its witch'd voices in mine ear ;  
My days were visionary,  
My nights were like the slumbers of the mad,  
And every dream swept o'er me glory-clad.

I read the burning letters  
Of warlike pomp, on History's page, alone ;  
I counted nothing the struck widow's moan ;  
I heard no clank of fetters ;  
I only felt the trumpet's stirring blast,  
And lean-eyed Famine stalked unchallenged past !

I heard, with veins of lightning,  
The utterance of the Statesman's word of power—

Binding and loosing nations in an hour—  
But while my eye was brightening,  
A masked detraction breathed upon his fame,  
And a curst serpent slimed his written name.

The Poet rapt mine ears  
With the transporting music that he sung.  
With fibres from his life his lyre he strung,  
And bathed the world in tears—  
And then he turned away to muse apart,  
And Scorn stole after him and broke his heart !

Yet here and there I saw  
One who did set the world at calm defiance,  
And press right onward with a bold reliance ;  
And he did seem to awe  
The very shadows pressing on his breast,  
And, with a strong heart, held himself at rest.

And then I looked again,  
And he had shut the door upon the crowd,

---

And on his face he lay and groaned aloud—  
Wrestling with hidden pain ;  
And in her chamber sat his wife in tears,  
And his sweet babes grew sad with whispered fears.

And so I turn'd sick-hearted  
From the bright cup away, and, in my sadness,  
Searched mine own bosom for some spring of gladness;  
And lo ! a fountain started  
Whose waters ev'n in death flow calm and fast,  
And my wild fever-thirst was slaked at last.

And then I met thee, Mary,  
And felt how love may into fulness pour,  
Like light into a fountain running o'er :  
And I did hope to vary  
My life but with surprises sweet as this—  
A dream, but for thy waking, filled with bliss.

Yet now I feel my spirit—  
Bitterly stirred, and—nay, lift up thy brow !

It is thine own voice echoing to thee now,  
And thou didst pray to hear it—  
I must unto my work and my stern hours !  
Take from my room thy harp, and books and flower:  
\* \* \* \* \*  
\* \* \* \* \* A year—

And in his room again he sat alone.  
His frame had lost its fulness in that time ;  
His manly features had grown sharp and thin,  
And from his lips the constant smile had faded.  
Wild fires had burned the languor from his eye :  
The lids looked fevered, and the brow was bent  
With an habitual frown. He was much changed.  
His chin was resting on his clenched hand,  
And with his foot he beat upon the floor  
Unconsciously the time of a sad tune.  
Thoughts of the past preyed on him bitterly.  
He had won power and held it. He had walked  
Steadily upward in the eye of Fame,  
And kept his truth unsullied—but his home  
Had been invaded by envenomed tongues ;

His wife—his spotless wife—had been assailed  
By slander, and his child had grown afraid  
To come to him—his manner was so stern.  
He could not speak beside his own hearth freely.  
His friends were half estranged, and vulgar men  
Presumed upon their services and grew  
Familiar with him. He'd small time to sleep,  
And none to pray ; and, with his heart in fetters,  
He bore deep insults silently, and bowed  
Respectfully to men who knew he loathed them !  
And when his heart was eloquent with truth,  
And love of country and an honest zeal  
Burned for expression, he could find no words  
They would not misinterpret with their lies.  
What were his many honours to him now ?  
The good half doubted, falsehood was so strong—  
His home was hateful with its cautious fears—  
His wife lay trembling on his very breast  
Frighted with calumny !—And this is FAME.

THE SCHOLAR OF THEBET BEN KHORAT.\*

---

"Influentia coeli morbum hunc movet, interdum omnibus aliis amotis."  
MELANCTHON DE ANIMA, CAP. DE HUMORIBUS.

---

NIGHT in Arabia. An hour ago,  
Pale Dian had descended from the sky,  
Flinging her cestus out upon the sea,  
And at their watches now the solemn stars  
Stood vigilant and lone ; and, dead asleep,

\* A famous Arabian astrologer, who is said to have spent forty years in discovering the motion of the eighth sphere. He had a scholar, a young Bedouin Arab, who, with a singular passion for knowledge, abandoned his wandering tribe, and, applying himself too closely to astrology, lost his reason, and died.

With not a shadow moving on its breast,  
 The breathing earth lay in its silver dew,  
 And, trembling on their myriad viewless wings,  
 Th' imprisoned odours left the flowers to dream,  
 And stole away upon the yielding air.

Ben Khorat's tower stands shadowy and tall  
 In Mecca's loneliest street ; and ever there,  
 When night is at the deepest, burns his lamp  
 As constant as the Cynosure, and forth  
 From his looped window stretch the brazen tubes,  
 Pointing for ever at the central star  
 Of that dim nebula just lifting now  
 Over Mount Arafat. The sky to-night  
 Is of a clearer blackness than is wont,  
 And far within its depths the coloured stars\*

\* " Even to the naked eye, the stars appear of palpably different colours; but when viewed with a prismatic glass, they may be very accurately classed into the red, the yellow, the brilliant white, the dull white, and the anomalous. This is true also of the planets, which shine by reflected light, and of course the difference of colour must be supposed to arise from their different powers to absorb and reflect the rays of the

THE SCHOLAR OF THEBET BEN KHORAT.\*

---

"*Alamut will neither burn nor be burned, neither smite nor smote.*"  
TRANSLATION BY ALICE, DAU OF ALEXANDER.

---

Nearly in Aralia. An hour ago,  
Pale Dian had descended from the sky,  
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Sparkle like gems—capricious Antares \*  
Flushing and paling in the Southern arch,  
And azure Lyra, like a woman's eye,  
Burning with soft blue lustre, and away  
Over the desert the bright Polar-star,  
White as a flashing icicle, and here,  
Hung like a lamp above th' Arabian sea,  
Mars with his dusky glow, and, fairer yet,  
Mild Sirius,† tinct with dewy violet,  
Set like a flower upon the breast of Eve ;  
And in the zenith the sweet Pleiades,‡  
(Alas—that ev'n a star may pass from heaven  
And not be miss'd !)—the linkéd Pleiades

sun. The original composition of the stars, and the different dispersive powers of their different atmospheres, may be supposed to account also for this phenomenon."

\* This star exhibits a peculiar quality—a rapid and beautiful change in the colour of its light ; every alternate twinkling being of an intense reddish crimson colour, and the answering one of a brilliant white.

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Undimmed are there, though from the sister band  
The fairest has gone down, and, South away,  
Hirundo\* with its little company,  
And white-browed Vesta, lamping on her path  
Lonely and planet-calm, and, all through heaven,  
Articulate almost, they troop to night,  
Like unrob'd angels in a prophet's trance.

Ben Khorat knelt before his telescope,†  
• Gazing with earnest stillness on the stars.  
The gray hairs, struggling from his turban folds,  
Played with the entering wind upon his cheeks,  
And on his breast his venerable beard  
With supernatural whiteness loosely fell.  
The black flesh swelled about his sandal thongs,  
Tight with his painful posture, and his lean  
And withered fingers to his knees were clenched,

\* An Arabic constellation placed instead of the Piscis Australis, because the swallow arrives in Arabia about the time of the heliacal rising of the Fishes.

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Lay with unwinking closeness to the lens,  
Stiffened with tense up-turning Hour by hour,  
Till the stars melted in the flush of morn,  
The old astrologer knelt moveless there,  
Ravished past pain with the bewildering spheres,  
And, hour by hour, with the same patient thought,  
Pored his pale scholar on the characters  
Of Chaldee writ, or, as his gaze grew dim  
With weariness, the dark-eyed Arab laid  
His head upon the window and looked forth  
Upon the heavens awhile, until the dews  
And the soft beauty of the silent night  
Cooled his flushed eyelids, and then patiently  
He turned unto his constant task again.

The sparry glinting of the Morning Star  
Shot through the leaves of a majestic palm  
Fringing Mount Arafat, and, as it caught  
The eye of the rapt scholar, he arose  
And clasped the volume with an eager haste,



And as the glorious planet mounted on,  
Melting her way into the upper sky,  
He breathlessly gazed on her :—

“ Star of the silver ray !  
Bright as a god, but punctual as a slave—  
What spirit the eternal canon gave  
That bends thee to thy way ?  
What is the soul that on thine arrowy light  
Is walking earth and heaven in pride to-night ?

We know when thou wilt soar  
Over the mount—thy change, and place, and time—  
'Tis written in the Chaldee's mystic rhyme  
As 'twere a priceless lore !  
I knew as much in my Bedouin garb—  
Coursing the desert on my flying barb !

How oft amid the tents  
Upon Sahara's sands I've walked alone,  
Waiting all night for thee, resplendent one !

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I knew as much in my Bedouin garb—  
Coursing the desert on my flying barb !

How oft amid the tents  
Upon Sahara’s sands I’ve walked alone,  
Waiting all night for thee, resplendent one !

With what magnificence,  
In the last watches, to my thirsting eye,  
Thy passionate beauty flushed into the sky !

Oh, God ! how flew my soul  
Out to thy glory—upward on thy ray—  
Panting as thou ascendedst on thy way,  
As if thine own control—  
This searchless spirit that I cannot find—  
Had set its radiant law upon my mind !

More than all stars in heaven  
I felt thee in my heart ! my love became  
A frenzy, and consumed me with its flame.  
Ay, in the desert even—  
My dark-eyed Abra coursing at my side—  
The star, not Abra, was my spirit's bride !

My Abra is no more !  
My ‘desert-bird’ is in a stranger’s stall—  
My tribe, my tent—I sacrificed them all



For this heart-wasting lore !—  
Yet than all these the thought is sweeter far—  
*Thou wert ascendant at my birth, bright star !*

The Chaldee calls me *thine*—  
And in this breast, that I must rend to be  
A spirit upon wings of light like thee,  
I feel that *thou art mine* !  
Oh, God ! that these dull fetters would give way  
And let me forth to track thy silver ray !”

\* \* \* Ben Khorat rose  
And silently looked forth upon the East.  
The dawn was stealing up into the sky  
On its gray feet, the stars grew dim apace,  
And faded, till the Morning Star alone,  
Soft as a molten diamond's liquid fire,  
Burned in the heavens. The morn grew freshlier—  
The upper clouds were faintly touched with gold,  
The fan-palms rustled in the early air,  
Daylight spread cool and broadly to the hills,

And still the star was visible, and still  
The young Bedouin with a straining eye  
Drank its departing light into his soul.  
It faded—melted—and the fiery rim  
Of the clear sun came up, and painfully  
The passionate scholar pressed upon his eyes  
His dusky fingers, and with limbs as weak  
As a sick child's, turned fainting to his couch,  
And slept.        \*        \*        \*

## II.

\*        \*        It was the morning watch once more.  
The clouds were drifting rapidly above,  
And dim and fast the glimmering stars flew through,  
And as the fitful gust soothed mournfully,  
The shutters shook, and on the sloping roof  
Plashed heavily large, single drops of rain,  
And all was still again. Ben Khorat sat  
By the dim lamp, and, while his scholar slept,  
Pored on the Chaldee wisdom. At his feet,  
Stretched on a pallet, lay the Arab boy,



Muttering fast in his unquiet sleep,  
And working his dark fingers in his palms  
Convulsively. His sallow lips were pale,  
And, as they moved, his teeth showed ghastly through,  
White as a charnel bone, and closely drawn  
Upon his sunken eyes, as if to press  
Some frightful image from the bloodshot balls,  
His lids a moment quivered, and again  
Relaxed, half open, in a calmer sleep.

Ben Khorat gazed upon the dropping sands  
Of the departing hour. The last white grain  
Fell through, and with the tremulous hand of age  
The old astrologer reversed the glass ;  
And, as the voiceless monitor went on,  
Wasting and wasting with the precious hour,  
He looked upon it with a moving lip,  
And, starting, turned his gaze upon the heavens,  
Cursing the clouds impatiently.

“ ‘Tis time !”

Muttered the dying scholar, and he dashed

The tangled hair from his black eyes away,  
And, seizing on Ben Khorat's mantle-folds,  
He struggled to his feet, and falling prone  
Upon the window-ledge, gazed stedfastly  
Into the East:—

“ There is a cloud between—  
She sits this instant on the mountain's brow,  
And that dusk veil hides all her glory now—  
Yet floats she as serene  
Into the heavens!—Oh, God! that even so  
I could o'ermount my spirit-cloud, and go!

The cloud begins to drift!  
Aha! Fling open! 'tis the star—the sky!  
Touch me, immortal mother! and I fly!  
Wider! thou cloudy rift!  
Let through!—such glory should have radiant room!  
Let through!—a star-child on its light goes home!

Speak to me, brethren bright!  
Ye who are floating in these living beams!

Ye who have come to me in starry dreams !  
Ye who have winged the light  
Of our bright mother with its thoughts of flame—  
—(I knew it passed through spirits as it came)—

Tell me ! what power have ye ?  
What are the heights ye reach upon your wings ?  
What know ye of the myriad wondrous things  
I perish but to see ?  
Are ye thought-rapid ?—Can ye fly as far—  
As instant as a thought, from star to star ?

Where has the Pleiad gone ?  
Where have all missing stars\* found light and home ?

\* ‘Missing stars’ are often spoken of in the old books of astronomy. Hipparchus mentions one that appeared and vanished very suddenly ; and in the beginning of the sixteenth century Kepler discovered a new star near the heel of the right foot of Serpentarius, “ so bright and sparkling that it exceeded any thing he had ever seen before.” He “ took notice that it was every moment changing into some of the colours of

Who bids the Stella Mira\* go and come?

Why sits the Pole-star lone?

And why, like banded sisters, through the air

Go in bright troops the constellations fair?

Ben Khorat! dost thou mark?

The star! the star! By heavens, the cloud drifts o'er!

Gone—and I live! nay—will my heart beat more?

Look! master! 'tis all dark!

Not a clear speck in heaven!—my eye-balls smother!

Break through the clouds once more! oh, starry  
mother!

I will lie down! Yet, stay!

The rain beats out the odour from the gums,

the rainbow, except when it was near the horizon, when it was generally white." It disappeared the following year, and has not been seen since.

\* A wonderful star in the neck of the Whale, discovered by Fabricius in the fifteenth century. It appears and disappears seven times in six years, and continues in the greatest lustre for fifteen days together.

And strangely soft to-night the spice-wind comes !

I am a child alway

When it is on my forehead ! Abra sweet !

Would I were in the desert at thy feet !

My barb ! my glorious steed !

Methinks my soul would mount upon its track

More fleetly, could I die upon thy back !

How would thy thrilling speed

Quicken my pulse !—Oh, Allah ! I get wild !

Would that I were once more a desert-child !

Nay—nay—I had forgot !

My mother ! my star mother !—Ha ! my breath

Stifles !—more air !—Ben Khorat ! this is—death !

Touch me !—I feel you not !

Dying !—Farewell ! good master !—room ! more room !

Abra ! I loved thee ! star—bright star ! I——come !"

How idly of the human heart we speak,

Giving it gods of clay ! How worse than vain

Is the school homily, that Eden's fruit  
Cannot be plucked too freely from "the tree  
Of good and evil." Wisdom sits alone,  
Topmost in heaven ;—she is its light—its God !  
And in the heart of man she sits as high—  
Though grovelling eyes forget her oftentimes,  
Seeing but this world's idols. The pure mind  
Sees her for ever : and in youth we come  
Filled with her sainted ravishment, and kneel,  
Worshipping God through her sweet altar-fires,  
And then is knowledge "good." We come too oft—  
The heart grows proud with fulness, and we soon  
Look with licentious freedom on the maid  
Throned in celestial beauty. There she sits,  
Robed in her soft and seraph loveliness,  
Instructing and forgiving, and we gaze  
Until desire grows wild, and, with our hands  
Upon her very garments, are struck down,  
Blasted with a consuming fire from heaven !  
Yet, oh ! how full of music from her lips  
Breathe the calm tones of wisdom ! Human praise



Is sweet till envy mars it, and the touch  
Of new-won gold stirs up the pulses well,  
And woman's love, if in a beggar's lamp  
'Twould burn, might light us cheerly through the world ;  
But Knowledge hath a far more 'wilderling tongue,  
And she will stoop and lead you to the stars,  
And witch you with her mysteries, till gold  
Is a forgotten dross, and power and fame  
Toys of an hour, and woman's careless love,  
Light as the breath that breaks it. He who binds  
His soul to knowledge steals the key of heaven—  
But 'tis a bitter mockery that the fruit  
May hang within his reach, and when, with thirst  
Wrought to a maddening frenzy, he would taste—  
It burns his lips to ashes !

THE HEALING OF THE DAUGHTER OF JAIRUS.

---

FRESHLY the cool breath of the coming eve  
Stole through the lattice, and the dying gir  
Felt it upon her forehead. She had lain  
Since the hot noon tide in a breathless trance,  
Her thin pale fingers clasp'd within the hand  
Of the heart-broken Ruler, and her breast,  
Like the dead marble, white and motionless.  
The shadow of a leaf lay on her lips,  
And as it stirr'd with the awakening wind,  
The dark lids lifted from her languid eyes,  
And her slight fingers mov'd, and heavily  
She turn'd upon her pillow. He was there—  
The same lov'd, tireless watcher, and she look'd

Into his face until her sight grew dim  
With the fast-falling tears, and, with a sigh  
Of tremulous weakness, murmuring his name,  
She gently drew his hand upon her lips,  
And kiss'd it as she wept. The old man sunk  
Upon his knees, and in the drapery  
Of the rich curtains buried up his face—  
And when the twilight fell, the silken folds  
Stirr'd with his prayer, but the slight hand he held  
Had ceased its pressure, and he could not hear  
In the dead, utter silence, that a breath  
Came through her nostrils, and her temples gave  
To his nice touch no pulse, and at her mouth  
He held the lightest curl that on her neck  
Lay with a mocking beauty, and his gaze  
Ach'd with its deathly stillness.

It was night—  
And softly o'er the Sea of Galilee  
Danced the breeze-ridden ripples to the shore,  
Tipp'd with the silver sparkles of the moon.

The breaking waves play'd low upon the beach  
Their constant music, but the air beside  
Was still as starlight, and the Saviour's voice,  
In its rich cadences unearthly sweet,  
Seem'd like some just-born harmony in the air,  
Wak'd by the power of wisdom. On a rock,  
With the broad moonlight falling on his brow,  
He stood and taught the people. At his feet  
Lay his small scrip, and pilgrim's scallop-shell,  
And staff, for they had waited by the sea  
Till he came o'er from Gadarene, and pray'd  
For his wont teachings as he came to land. . .  
His hair was parted meekly on his brow,  
And the long curls from off his shoulders fell  
As he leaned forward earnestly, and still  
The same calm cadence, passionless and deep,  
And in his looks the same mild majesty,  
And in his mien the sadness mix'd with power,  
Fill'd them with love and wonder. Suddenly,  
As on his words entrancedly they hung,  
The crowd divided, and among them stood

**JAIRUS THE RULER.** With his flowing robe  
Gather'd in haste about his loins, he came,  
And fix'd his eyes on Jesus. Closer drew  
The twelve disciples to their Master's side,  
And silently the people shrunk away,  
And left the haughty Ruler in the midst  
Alone. A moment longer on the face  
Of the meek Nazarene he kept his gaze,  
And as the twelve look'd on him, by the light  
Of the clear moon they saw a glistening tear  
Steal to his silver beard, and drawing nigh  
Unto the Saviour's feet, he took the hem  
Of his coarse mantle, and with trembling hands  
Press'd it upon his lips, and murmur'd low,  
*“Master! my daughter!”*— . . . . .

. . . . .      The same silvery light,  
That shone upon the lone rock by the sea,  
Slept on the Ruler's lofty capitals  
As at the door he stood, and welcom'd in  
Jesus and his disciples. All was still.

The echoing vestibule gave back the slide  
Of their loose sandals, and the arrowy beam  
Of moonlight slanting to the marble floor  
Lay like a spell of silence in the rooms  
As Jairus led them on. With hushing steps  
He trod the winding stair, but ere he touch'd  
The latchet, from within a whisper came,  
*"Trouble the Master not—for she is dead!"*  
And his faint hand fell nerveless at his side,  
And his steps falter'd, and his broken voice  
Chok'd in its utterance;—But a gentle hand  
Was laid upon his arm, and in his ear  
The Saviour's voice sânk thrillingly and low,  
*"She is not dead—but sleepeth."*

They pass'd in.

The spice-lamps in the alabaster urns  
Burn'd dimly, and the white and fragrant smoke  
Curl'd indolently on the chamber walls.  
The silken curtains slumbered in their folds—  
Not ev'n a tassel stirring in the air—

And as the Saviour stood beside the bed,  
And pray'd inaudibly, the Ruler heard  
The quickening division of his breath  
As he grew earnest inwardly. There came  
A gradual brightness o'er his calm sad face,  
And drawing nearer to the bed, he mov'd  
The silken curtains silently apart  
And look'd upon the maiden.

Like a form

Of matchless sculpture in her sleep she lay—  
The linen vesture folded on her breast,  
And over it her white transparent hands,  
The blood still rosy in their tapering nails.  
A line of pearl ran through her parted lips,  
And in her nostrils, spiritually thin,  
The breathing curve was mockingly like life,  
And round beneath the faintly tinted skin  
Ran the light branches of the azure veins—  
And on her cheek the jet lash overlay  
Matching the arches pencil'd on her brow.

Her hair had been unbound, and falling loose  
Upon her pillow, hid her small round ears  
In curls of glossy blackness, and about  
Her polished neck, scarce touching it, they hung  
Like airy shadows floating as they slept.  
'Twas heavenly beautiful. The Saviour rais'd  
Her hand from off her bosom, and spread out  
The snowy fingers in his palm, and said  
“ *Maiden! Arise!*”—and suddenly a flush  
Shot o'er her forehead, and along her lips  
And through her cheek the rallied colour ran,  
And the still outline of her graceful form  
Stirr'd in the linen vesture, and she clasp'd  
The Saviour's hand, and fixing her dark eyes  
Full on his beaming countenance—**AROSE!**

TO A CITY PIGEON.

---

STOOP to my window, thou beautiful dove !  
Thy daily visits have touch'd my love.  
I watch thy coming, and list the note  
That stirs so low in thy mellow throat,  
    And my joy is high  
To catch the glance of thy gentle eye.

Why dost thou sit on the heated eaves,  
And forsake the wood with its freshen'd leaves ?  
Why dost thou haunt the sultry street,  
When the paths of the forest are cool and sweet ?  
    How canst thou bear  
This noise of people—this sultry air ?

Thou alone of the feather'd race  
Dost look unscared on the human face ;  
Thou alone, with a wing to flee,  
Dost love with man in his haunts to be ;  
And "the gentle dove"  
Has become a name for trust and love.

A holy gift is thine, sweet bird !  
Thou'rt nam'd with childhood's earliest word !  
Thou'rt link'd with all that is fresh and wild  
In the prison'd thoughts of the city child,  
And thy glossy wings  
Are its brightest image of moving things.

It is no light chance. Thou art set apart,  
Wisely by Him who has tam'd thy heart,  
To stir the love for the bright and fair  
That else were seal'd in this crowded air ;  
I sometimes dream  
Angelic rays from thy pinions stream.

Come then, ever, when daylight leaves  
The page I read, to my humble eaves,  
And wash thy breast in the hollow spout,  
And murmur thy low sweet music out !

I hear and see  
Lessons of Heaven, sweet bird, in thee !

ON A PICTURE OF A BEAUTIFUL BOY.

---

" Thou who yet dost keep  
Thy heritage, thou eye among the blind,  
That, deaf and silent, readst the eternal deep,  
Haunted for ever by the eternal mind."

WORDSWORTH.

---

A boy ! yet in his eye you trace  
The watchfulness of riper years,  
And tales are in that serious face  
Of feelings early steep'd in tears ;  
And in that tranquil gaze  
There lingers many a thought unsaid,  
Shadows of other days,  
Whose hours with shapes of beauty came and fled.



And sometimes it is even so !  
The spirit ripens in the germ ;  
The new-seal'd fountains overflow,  
The bright wings tremble in the worm.  
The soul detects some passing token,  
Some emblem of a brighter world,  
And, with its shell of clay unbroken,  
Its shining pinions are unfurl'd,  
And, like a blessed dream,  
Phantoms, apparell'd from the sky,  
Athwart its vision gleam  
As if the light of Heaven had touched its gifted eye.

'Tis strange how childhood's simple words  
Interpret Nature's mystic book—  
How it will listen to the birds,  
Or ponder on the running brook,  
As if its spirit fed.  
And strange that we remember not,  
Who fill its eye, and weave its lot,  
How lightly it were led  
Back to the home which it has scarce forgot.

ON THE PICTURE OF A " CHILD TIRED OF PLAY.

---

Tired of play ! Tired of play !  
What hast thou done this livelong day ?  
The birds are silent, and so is the bee ;  
The sun is creeping up steeple and tree ;  
The doves have flown to the sheltering eaves,  
And the nests are dark with the drooping leaves,  
Twilight gathers, and day is done—  
How hast thou spent it—restless one !

Playing ? But what hast thou done beside  
To tell thy mother at even tide ?  
What promise of morn is left unbroken ?  
What kind word to thy playmate spoken ?



Whom hast thou pitied, and whom forgiven ?  
How with thy faults has duty striven ?  
What hast thou learned by field and hill,  
By greenwood path, and by singing rill ?

There will come an eve to a longer day,  
That will find thee tired—but not of play !  
And thou wilt lean, as thou leanest now,  
With drooping limbs and an aching brow,  
And wish the shadows would faster creep,  
And long to go to thy quiet sleep.  
Well were it then if thine aching brow  
Were as free from sin and shame as now !  
Well for thee, if thy lip could tell  
A tale like this, of a day spent well.  
If thine open hand hath reliev'd distress—  
If thy pity hath sprung to wretchedness—  
If thou hast forgiven the sore offence,  
And humbled thy heart with penitence—  
If Nature's voices have spoken to thee  
With their holy meanings eloquently—

If every creature hath won thy love,  
From the creeping worm to the brooding dove,  
If never a sad, low-spoken word  
Hath plead with thy human heart unheard—  
Then, when the night steals on as now,  
It will bring relief to thine aching brow,  
And, with joy and peace at the thought of rest,  
Thou wilt sink to sleep on thy mother's breast.

## IDLENESS.

---

" Idleness is sweet and sacred."

WALTER SAVAGE LANDOR.

" When you have found a day to be idle, be idle for a day.

" When you have met with three cups to drink, drink your three cups."

CHINESE POET.

---

THE rain is playing its soft pleasant tune  
Fitfully on the skylight, and the shade  
Of the fast-flying clouds across my book  
Passes with delicate change. My merry fire  
Sings cheerfully to itself; my musing cat

Purrs as she wakes from her unquiet sleep,  
And looks into my face as if she felt  
Like me the gentle influence of the rain.  
Here have I sat since morn, reading sometimes,  
And sometimes listening to the faster fall  
Of the large drops, or rising with the stir  
Of an unbidden thought, have walked awhile  
With the slow steps of indolence, my room,  
And then sat down composedly again  
To my quaint book of olden poetry.  
It is a kind of idleness, I know ;  
And I am said to be an idle man—  
And it is very true. I love to go  
Out in the pleasant sun, and let my eye  
Rest on the human faces that pass by,  
Each with its gay or busy interest :  
And then I muse upon their lot, and read  
Many a lesson in their changeful cast,  
And so grow kind of heart, as if the sight  
Of human beings were humanity.  
And I am better after it, and go

More gratefully to my rest, and feel a love  
Stirring my heart to every living thing,  
And my low prayer has more humility,  
And I sink lightlier to my dreams—and this,  
'Tis very true, is only idleness !  
  
I love to go and mingle with the young  
In the gay festal room—when every heart  
Is beating faster than the merry tune,  
And their blue eyes are restless, and their lips  
Parted with eager joy, and their round cheeks  
Flushed with the beautiful motion of the dance.  
  
And I can look upon such things, and go  
Back to my solitude, and dream bright dreams  
For their fast coming years, and speak of them  
Earnestly in my prayer, till I am glad  
With a benevolent joy—and this, I know,  
To the world's eye, is only idleness !

And when the clouds pass suddenly away,  
And the blue sky is like a newer world,  
And the sweet growing things—forest and flower,

Humble and beautiful alike—are all  
Breathing up odours to the very heaven—  
Or when the frost has yielded to the sun  
In the rich autumn, and the filmy mist  
Lies like a silver lining on the sky,  
And the clear air exhilarates, and life  
Simply, is luxury—and when the hush  
Of twilight, like a gentle sleep, steals on,  
And the birds settle to their nests, and stars  
Spring in the upper sky, and there is not  
A sound that is not low and musical—  
At all these pleasant seasons I go out  
With my first impulse guiding me, and take  
Woodpath or stream, or slope by hill or vale,  
And in my recklessness of heart, stray on,  
Glad with the birds, and silent with the leaves,  
And happy with the fair and blessed world—  
And this, 'tis true, is only idleness !

And I should love to go up to the sky,  
And course the heavens, like stars, and float away

Upon the gliding clouds that have no stay  
In their swift journey—and 'twould be a joy  
To walk the chambers of the deep, and tread  
The pearls of its untrodden floor, and know  
The tribes of the unfathomable depths—  
Dwellers beneath the pressure of a sea !  
And I should love to issue with the wind  
On a strong errand, and o'ersweep the earth  
With its broad continents and islands green,  
Like to the passing of a spirit on!—  
And this, 'tis true, were only idleness !

## SPRING.

---

“ L’onda dal mar divisa  
Bagua la valle e l’monte,  
Va passeggiara  
In fiume,  
Va prigionera  
In fonte,  
Mormora sempre e gemme  
Fin che non torna al mar.”

METASTASIO.

---

THE Spring is here—the delicate-footed May,  
With its slight fingers full of leaves and flowers ;  
And with it comes a thirst to be away,  
Wasting in wood-paths its voluptuous hours—  
A feeling that is like a sense of wings,  
Restless to soar above these perishing things.



We pass out from the city's feverish hum,  
To find refreshment in the silent woods ;  
And nature, that is beautiful and dumb,  
Like a cool sleep upon the pulses broods—  
Yet, even there, a restless thought will steal  
To teach the indolent heart it still must *feel*.

Strange, that the audible stillness of the noon,  
The waters tripping with their silver feet,  
The turning to the light of leaves in June,  
And the light whisper as their edges meet—  
Strange—that they fill not, with their tranquil tone,  
The spirit, walking in their midst alone.

There's no contentment in a world like this,  
Save in forgetting the immortal dream ;  
We may not gaze upon the stars of bliss,  
That through the cloud-rifts radiantly stream ;  
Bird-like, the prisoned soul *will* lift its eye  
And pine till it is hooded from the sky.

## THE TORN HAT.

(A PICTURE BY SULLY.)

---

“A leaf  
Fresh flung upon a river, that will dance  
Upon the wave that stealeth out its life,  
Then sink of its own heaviness.”

PHILIP SLINGSBY.

---

THERE's something in a noble boy,  
    A brave, free-hearted, careless one,  
With his unchecked, unbidden joy,  
    His dread of books and love of fun,  
And in his clear and ready smile,  
    Unshaded by a thought of guile,  
    And unrepressed by sadness—  
Which brings me to my childhood back,  
As if I trod its very track,  
    And felt its very gladness.



And yet it is not in his play,  
When every trace of thought is lost,  
And not when you would call him gay,  
That his bright presence thrills me most.  
His shout may ring upon the hill,  
His voice be echoed in the hall,  
His merry laugh like music trill,  
And I in sadness hear it all—  
For, like the wrinkles on my brow,  
I scarcely notice such things now—  
But when, amid the earnest game,  
He stops, as if he music heard,  
And, heedless of his shouted name  
As of the carol of a bird,  
Stands gazing on the empty air  
As if some dream were passing there—  
'Tis then that on his face I look,  
His beautiful but thoughtful face,  
And, like a long-forgotten book,  
Its sweet, familiar meanings trace,  
Remembering a thousand things

Which passed me on those golden wings,  
Which time has fettered now—  
Things that came o'er me with a thrill,  
And left me silent, sad, and still,  
And threw upon my brow  
A holier and a gentler cast,  
That was too innocent to last.

'Tis strange how thought upon a child  
Will, like a presence, sometimes press,  
And when his pulse is beating wild,  
And life itself is in excess—  
When foot and hand, and ear and eye,  
Are all with ardour straining high—  
How in his heart will spring  
A feeling whose mysterious thrall  
Is stronger, sweeter far than all ;  
And on its silent wing,  
How with the clouds he'll float away,  
As wandering and as lost as they !

## APRIL.

---

"A violet by a mossy stone,  
Half hidden from the eye,  
Fair as a star, when only one  
Is shining in the sky."

WORDSWORTH.

---

I HAVE found violets. April hath come on,  
And the cool winds feel softer, and the rain  
Falls in the beaded drops of summer time.  
You may hear birds at morning, and at eve  
The tame dove lingers till the twilight falls,  
Cooing upon the eaves, and drawing in  
His beautiful bright neck, and, from the hills,  
A murmur like the hoarseness of the sea  
Tells the release of waters, and the earth

Sends up a pleasant smell, and the dry leaves  
Are lifted by the grass—and so I know  
That Nature, with her delicate ear, hath heard  
The dropping of the velvet foot of Spring.  
Take of my violets! I found them where  
The liquid South stole o'er them, on a bank  
That leaned to running water. There's to me  
A daintiness about these early flowers  
That touches me like poetry. They blow  
With such a simple loveliness among  
The common herbs of pasture, and breathe out  
Their lives so unobtrusively, like hearts  
Whose beatings are too gentle for the world.  
I love to go in the capricious days  
Of April and hunt violets; when the rain  
Is in the blue cups trembling, and they nod  
So gracefully to the kisses of the wind.  
It may be deem'd too idle, but the young  
Read nature like the manuscript of heaven,  
And call the flowers its poetry. Go out!  
Ye spirits of habitual unrest,

And read it when the "fever of the world"  
Hath made your hearts impatient, and, if life  
Hath yet one spring unpoisoned, it will be  
Like a beguiling music to its flow,  
And you will no more wonder that I love  
To hunt for violets in the April time.

**THE BELFRY PIGEON.**

---

"Mine eyes are sick of this perpetual flow  
Of people, and my heart of one sad thought."

SHELLEY

---

ON the cross beam under the Old South bell  
The nest of a pigeon is builded well.  
In summer and winter that bird is there,  
Out and in with the morning air :  
I love to see him track the street,  
With his wary eye and active feet ;  
And I often watch him as he springs,  
Circling the steeple with easy wings,  
Till across the dial his shade has passed,  
And the belfry edge is gained at last.



'Tis a bird I love, with its brooding note,  
And the trembling throb in its mottled throat ;  
There's a human look in its swelling breast,  
And the gentle curve of its lowly crest ;  
And I often stop with the fear I feel—  
He runs so close to the rapid wheel.

Whatever is rung on that noisy bell—  
Chime of the hour, or funeral knell—  
The dove in the belfry must hear it well.  
When the tongue swings out to the midnight moon—  
When the sexton cheerly rings for noon—  
When the clock strikes clear at morning light—  
When the child is waked with “ nine at night ”—  
When the chimes play soft in the Sabbath air,  
Filling the spirit with tones of prayer—  
Whatever tale in the bell is heard,  
He broods on his folded feet unstirred,  
Or rising half in his rounded nest,  
He takes the time to smooth his breast,

Then drops again with filmed eyes,  
And sleeps as the last vibration dies.

Sweet bird ! I would that I could be  
A hermit in the crowd like thee !  
With wings to fly to wood and glen,  
Thy lot, like mine, is cast with men ;  
And daily, with unwilling feet,  
I tread, like thee, the crowded street ;  
But, unlike me, when day is o'er,  
Thou canst dismiss the world and soar,  
Or, at a half-felt wish for rest,  
Canst smooth thy feathers on thy breast,  
And drop, forgetful, to thy nest.

I would that in such wings of gold  
I could my weary heart upfold ;  
I would I could look down unmoved,  
(Unloving as I am unloved,)  
And while the world throngs on beneath,

Smooth down my cares and calmly breathe ;  
And never sad with others' sadness,  
And never glad with others' gladness,  
Listen, unstirred, to knell or chime,  
And, lapt in quiet, bide my time.

ON A PICTURE OF A GIRL LEADING HER BLIND  
MOTHER THROUGH THE WOOD.

---

THE green leaves as we pass  
Lay their light fingers on thee unaware,  
And by thy side the hazels cluster fair,  
    And the low forest-grass  
Grows green and silken where the wood-paths wind—  
Alas ! for thee, sweet mother ! thou art blind !

    And nature is all bright ;  
And the faint gray and crimson of the dawn,  
Like folded curtains from the day are drawn ;  
    And evening's purple light

Quivers in tremulous softness on the sky—  
Alas ! sweet mother ! for thy clouded eye !

The moon's new silver shell .  
Trembles above thee, and the stars float up,  
In the blue air, and the rich tulip s cup  
Is pencill'd passing well,  
And the swift birds on glorious pinions flee—  
Alas ! sweet mother ! that thou canst not see !

And the kind looks of friends  
Peruse the sad expression in thy face,  
And the child stops amid his bounding race,  
And the tall stripling bends  
Low to thine ear with duty unforget—  
Alas ! sweet mother ! that thou seest them not !

But thou canst *hear !* and love  
May richly on a human tone be pour'd,  
And the least cadence of a whisper'd word  
A daughter's love may prove—

And while I speak thou knowest if I smile,  
Albeit thou canst not see my face the while !

Yes, thou canst hear ! and He  
Who on thy sightless eye its darkness hung,  
To the attentive ear, like harps, hath strung  
Heaven and earth and sea ?  
And 'tis a lesson in our hearts to know - .  
*With but one sense the soul may overflow.*

## TO A STOLEN RING.

---

Oh for thy history now ! Hadst thou a tongue  
To whisper of thy secrets, I could lay  
Upon thy jewell'd tracery mine ear  
And dream myself in heaven. Thou hast been worn  
In that fair creature's pride, and thou hast felt  
The bounding of the haughtiest blood that e'er  
Sprang from the heart of woman ; and thy gold  
Has lain upon her forehead in the hour  
Of sadness, when the weary thoughts came fast,  
And life was but a bitterness with all  
Its vividness and beauty. She has gazed  
In her fair girlhood on thy snowy pearls,  
And mused away the hours, and she has bent

On thee the downcast radiance of her eye  
When a deep tone was eloquent in her ear,  
And thou hast lain upon her cheek, and prest  
Back on her heart its beatings, and put by  
From her vein'd temples the luxuriant curls,  
And in her peaceful sleep, when she has lain  
In her unconscious beauty, and the dreams  
Of her high heart came goldenly and soft,  
Thou hast been there unhidden, and hast felt  
The swelling of the clear transparent veins  
As the rich blood rush'd through them, warm and fi

I am impatient as I gaze on thee,  
Thou inarticulate jewel ! Thou hast heard  
With thy dull ear such music !—the low tone  
Of a young sister's tenderness, when night  
Hath folded them together like one flower—  
The sudden snatch of a remember'd song  
Warbled capriciously—the careless word  
Lightly betraying the inaudible thought  
Working within the heart, and more than all,

Thou hast been lifted when the fervent prayer  
For a lov'd mother, or the sleeping one  
Lying beside her, trembled on her lip,  
And the warm tear that from her eye stole out  
As the soft lash fell over it, has lain  
Amid thy shining jewels like a star.

## TO MY MOTHER FROM THE APPENINES.

---

" Mother! dear mother! the feelings nurst  
As I hung at thy bosom, *clung round thee first.*  
'Twas the earliest link in love's warm chain—  
'Tis the only one that will long remain;  
And as year by year, and day by day,  
Some friend still trusted drops away,  
Mother! dear mother! *oh dost thou see*  
*How the shorten'd chain brings me nearer thee !?*"

PHILIP SLINGBY.

---

Tis midnight the lone mountains on—  
The East is fleck'd with cloudy bars,  
And, gliding through them one by one,  
The moon walks up her path of stars—  
The light upon her placid brow  
Borrowed of fountains unseen now.



And happiness is mine to-night,  
Thus springing from an unseen fount,  
And breast and brain are warm with light,  
With midnight round me on the mount—  
Its rays, like thine, fair Dian, flow  
From far that Western star below.

Dear mother ! in thy love I live ;  
The life thou gav'st flows yet from thee—  
And, sun-like, thou hast power to give  
Life to the earth, air, sea, for me !  
Though wandering, as this moon above,  
I'm dark without thy constant love.



PART III.

EARLY POEMS.

INSCRIBED TO SIR GEORGE STAUNTON, BART.

11

THE SHUNAMITE.\*

---

IT was a sultry day of summer time.  
The sun pour'd down upon the ripen'd grain  
With quivering heat, and the suspended leaves  
Hung motionless. The cattle on the hills  
Stood still, and the divided flock were all  
Laying their nostrils to the cooling roots,  
And the sky look'd like silver, and it seem'd  
As if the air had fainted, and the pulse  
Of nature had run down, and ceas'd to beat.

“ Haste thee, my child !” the Syrian mother said,

2 Kings iv. 18—37.

“ Thy father is athirst”—and from the depths  
Of the cool well under the leaning tree,  
She drew refreshing water, and with thoughts  
Of God’s sweet goodness stirring at her heart,  
She bless’d her beautiful boy, and to his way  
Committed him. And he went lightly on,  
With his soft hands press’d closely to the cool  
Stone vessel, and his little naked feet  
Lifted with watchful care, and o’er the hills,  
And through the light green hollows, where the lambs  
Go for the tender grass, he kept his way,  
Wiling its distance with his simple thoughts,  
Till, in the wilderness of sheaves, with brows  
Throbbing with heat, he set his burthen down.

Childhood is restless ever, and the boy  
Stay’d not within the shadow of the tree,  
But with a joyous industry went forth  
Into the reapers’ places, and bound up  
His tiny sheaves, and plaited cunningly  
The pliant withs out of the shining straw,



Cheering their labour on, till they forgot  
The very weariness of their stooping toil  
In the beguiling of his earnest mirth.  
Presently he was silent, and his eye  
Closed as with dizzy pain, and with his hand  
Press'd hard upon his forehead, and his breast  
Heaving with the suppression of a cry,  
He utter'd a faint murmur, and fell back  
Upon the loosen'd sheaf, insensible.

They bore him to his mother, and he lay  
Upon her knees till noon—and then he died !  
She had watch'd every breath, and kept her hand  
Soft on his forehead, and gaz'd in upon  
The dreamy languor of his listless eye,  
And she had laid back all his sunny curls,  
And kiss'd his delicate lip, and lifted him  
Into her bosom, till her heart grew strong—  
His beauty was so unlike death ! She leaned  
Over him now, that she might catch the low  
Sweet music of his breath, that she had learn'd

To love when he was slumbering at her side  
In his unconscious infancy—

—“ So still !

’Tis a soft sleep ! How beautiful he lies,  
With his fair forehead, and the rosy veins  
Playing so freshly in his sunny cheek !

How could they say that he would die ! Oh God !  
I could not lose him ! I have treasured all  
His childhood in my heart, and even now,  
As he has slept, my memory has been there,  
Counting like treasure all his winning ways—  
His unforgotten sweetness :—

—“ Yet so still !—

How like this breathless slumber is to death !

I could believe that in that bosom now  
There were no pulse—it beats so languidly !

I cannot see it stir ; but his red lip !—  
Death would not be so very beautiful !  
And that half smile—would death have left *that* there ?  
— And should I not have felt that he would die ?  
And have I not wept over him ?—and prayed

Morning and night for him?—and *could* he die?  
—No—God will keep him! He will be my pride  
Many long years to come, and this fair hair  
Will darken like his father's, and his eye  
Be of a deeper blue when he is grown;  
And he will be so tall, and I shall look  
With such a pride upon him!—*He* to die!"  
And the fond mother lifted his soft curls,  
And smiled, as if 'twere mockery to think  
That such fair things could perish—

## —Suddenly

Her hand shrunk from him, and the colour fled  
From her fix'd lip, and her supporting knees  
Were shook beneath her child. Her hand had touch'd  
His forehead, as she dallied with his hair—  
And it was cold—like clay! Slow, very slow,  
Came the misgiving that her child was dead.  
She sat a moment, and her eyes were clos'd  
In a dumb prayer for strength, and then she took  
His little hand and press'd it earnestly—  
And put her lip to his—and look'd again

Fearfully on him—and then, bending low,  
She whisper'd in his ear, “ My son !—My son !”  
And as the echo died, and not a sound  
Broke on the stillness, and he lay there still  
Motionless on her knee—the truth *would* come !  
And with a sharp, quick cry, as if her heart  
Were crush'd, she lifted him and held him close  
Into her bosom—with a mother's thought—  
As if death had no power to touch him there !

\*       \*       \*       \*

The man of God came forth, and led the child  
Unto his mother, and went on his way.  
And he was there—her beautiful—her own—  
Living and smiling on her—with his arms  
Folded about her neck, and his warm breath  
Breathing upon her lips, and in her ear  
The music of his gentle voice once more !

**ABDALOM.**

---

The waters slept. Night's silvery veil hung low  
On Jordan's bosom, and the eddies curled  
Their glassy rings beneath it, like the still,  
Unbroken beating of the sleeper's pulse.  
The reeds bent down the stream ; the willow leaves,  
With a soft cheek upon the lulling tide,  
Forgot the lifting winds ; and the long stems,  
Whose flowers the water, like a gentle nurse,  
Bears on its bosom, quietly gave way,  
And leaned, in graceful attitudes, to rest.  
How strikingly the course of nature tells,  
By its light heed of human suffering,  
That it was fashioned for a happier world !

King David's limbs were weary. He had fled  
From far Jerusalem ; and now he stood,  
With his faint people, for a little rest  
Upon the shore of Jordan. The light wind  
Of morn was stirring, and he bared his brow  
To its refreshing breath ; for he had worn  
The mourner's covering, and he had not felt  
That he could see his people until now.  
They gather'd round him on the fresh green bank,  
And spoke their kindly words ; and, as the sun  
Rose up in heaven, he knelt among them there,  
And bowed his head upon his hands to pray.  
Oh ! when the heart is full—when bitter thoughts  
Come crowding thickly up for utterance,  
And the poor common words of courtesy  
Are such a very mockery—how much  
The bursting heart may pour itself in prayer !  
He pray'd for Israel—and his voice went up  
Strongly and fervently. He pray'd for those  
Whose love had been his shield—and his deep tones  
Grew tremulous. But, oh ! for Absalom—

For his estranged, misguided Absalom—  
The proud, bright being, who had burst away  
In all his princely beauty, to defy  
The heart that cherished him—for him he poured,  
In agony that would not be controlled,  
Strong supplication, and forgave him there,  
Before his God, for his deep sinfulness.

\*       \*       \*       \*

The pall was settled. He who slept beneath  
Was straightened for the grave; and, as the folds  
Sunk to the still proportions, they betrayed  
The matchless symmetry of Absalom.  
His hair was yet unshorn, and silken curls  
Were floating round the tassels as they swayed  
To the admitted air, as glossy now  
As when, in hours of gentle dalliance, bathing  
The snowy fingers of Judea's daughters.  
His helm was at his feet: his banner, soiled  
With trailing through Jerusalem, was laid,  
Reversed, beside him: and the jewelled hilt,  
Whose diamonds lit the passage of his blade,

Rested, like mockery, on his covered brow.  
The soldiers of the king trod to and fro,  
Clad in the garb of battle ; and their chief,  
The mighty Joab, stood beside the bier,  
And gazed upon the dark pall steadfastly,  
As if he feared the slumberer might stir.  
A slow step startled him. He grasped his blade  
As if a trumpet rang ; but the bent form  
Of David entered, and he gave command,  
In a low tone, to his few followers,  
And left him with his dead. The king stood still  
Till the last echo died : then, throwing off  
The sackcloth from his brow, and laying back  
The pall from the still features of his child,  
He bowed his head upon him, and broke forth  
In the resistless eloquence of wo :

“ Alas ! my noble boy! that thou should’st die !  
Thou, who wert made so beautifully fair !  
That death should settle in thy glorious eye,  
And leave his stillness in this clustering hair !



How could he mark thee for the silent tomb,  
My proud boy Absalom !

“ Cold is thy brow, my son ! and I am chill,  
As to my bosom I have tried to press thee !  
How was I wont to feel my pulses thrill,  
Like a rich harp-string, yearning to caress thee,  
And hear thy sweet “ *my father !* ” from these dumb  
And cold lips, Absalom !

“ The grave hath won thee. I shall hear the gush  
Of music, and the voices of the young ;  
And life will pass me in the mantling blush,  
And the dark tresses to the soft winds flung ;—  
But thou no more, with thy sweet voice, shalt come  
To meet me, Absalom !

“ And oh ! when I am stricken, and my heart,  
Like a bruised reed, is waiting to be broken,  
How will its love for thee, as I depart,  
Yearn for thine ear to drink its last deep token !

It were so sweet, amid death's gathering gloom,  
To see thee, Absalom !

“ And now, farewell ! ’Tis hard to give thee up,  
With death so like a gentle slumber on thee :—  
And thy dark sin !—Oh ! I could drink the cup.  
If from this wo its bitterness had won thee.  
May God have called thee, like a wanderer, home,  
My erring Absalom !”

He covered up his face, and bowed himself  
A moment on his child : then, giving him  
A look of melting tenderness, he clasped  
His hands convulsively, as if in prayer ;  
And, as a strength were given him of God,  
He rose up calmly, and composed the pall  
Firmly and decently, and left him there,  
As if his rest had been a breathing sleep.



### HAGAR IN THE WILDERNESS.

---

THE morning broke. Light stole upon the clouds  
With a strange beauty. Earth received again  
Its garment of a thousand dies ; and leaves,  
And delicate blossoms, and the painted flowers,  
And every thing that bendeth to the dew,  
And stirreth with the daylight, lifted up  
Its beauty to the breath of that sweet morn.

All things are dark to sorrow ; and the light  
And loveliness, and fragrant air were sad  
To the dejected Hagar. The moist earth  
Was pouring odours from its spicy pores,  
And the young birds were singing as if life

Were a new thing to them ; but oh ! it came  
Upon her heart like discord, and she felt  
How cruelly it tries a broken heart,  
To see a mirth in any thing it loves.  
She stood at Abraham's tent. Her lips were pressed  
Till the blood started ; and the wandering veins  
Of her transparent forehead were swelled out,  
As if her pride would burst them. Her dark eye  
Was clear and tearless, and the light of heaven,  
Which made its language legible, shot back  
From her long lashes, as it had been flame.  
Her noble boy stood by her, with his hand  
Clasped in her own, and his round, delicate feet,  
Scarce trained to balance on the tented floor,  
Sandaled for journeying. He had looked up  
Into his mother's face until he caught  
The spirit there, and his young heart was swelling  
Beneath his dimpled bosom, and his form  
Straightened up proudly in his tiny wrath,  
As if his light proportions would have swelled,  
Had they but matched his spirit, to the man.

Why bends the patriarch as he cometh now  
Upon his staff so wearily? His beard  
Is low upon his breast, and his high brow,  
So written with the converse of his God,  
Beareth the swollen vein of agony.  
His lip is quivering, and his wonted step  
Of vigour is not there; and, though the morn  
Is passing fair and beautiful, he breathes  
Its freshness as it were a pestilence.  
Oh! man may bear with suffering: his heart  
Is a strong thing, and godlike in the grasp  
Of pain that wrings mortality; but tear  
One cord affection clings to, part one tie  
That binds him to a woman's delicate love,  
And his great spirit yieldeth like a reed.

He gave to her the water and the bread,  
But spoke no word, and trusted not himself  
To look upon her face, but laid his hand  
In silent blessing on the fair-haired boy,  
And left her to her lot of loneliness.

Should Hagar weep? May slighted woman tur  
And, as a vine the oak hath shaken off,  
Bend lightly to her leaning trust again?  
O no! by all her loveliness—by all  
That makes life poetry and beauty, no!  
Make her a slave; steal from her rosy cheek  
By needless jealousies; let the last star  
Leave her a watcher by your couch of pain;  
Wrong her by petulance, suspicion, all  
That makes her cup a bitterness—yet give  
One evidence of love, and earth has not  
An emblem of devotedness like hers.  
But, oh! estrange her once—it boots not how—  
By wrong or silence, any thing that tells  
A change has come upon your tenderness,—  
And there is not a high thing out of heaven  
Her pride o'ermastereth not.

She went her way with a strong step and slow;  
Her pressed lip arched, and her clear eye undimm  
As it had been a diamond, and her form



Borne proudly up, as if her heart breathed through.  
Her child kept on in silence, though she pressed  
His hand till it was pained : for he had caught,  
As I have said, her spirit, and the seed  
Of a stern nation had been breathed upon.

The morning past, and Asia's sun rode up  
In the clear heaven, and every beam was heat.  
The cattle of the hills were in the shade,  
And the bright plumage of the Orient lay  
On beating bosoms in her spicy trees.  
It was an hour of rest ; but Hagar found  
No shelter in the wilderness, and on  
She kept her weary way, until the boy  
Hung down his head, and opened his parched lips  
For water ; but she could not give it him.  
She laid him down beneath the sultry sky,—  
For it was better than the close, hot breath  
Of the thick pines,—and tried to comfort him ;  
But he was sore athirst, and his blue eyes,  
Were dim and bloodshot, and he could not know

Why God denied him water in the wild.  
She sat a little longer, and he grew  
Ghastly and faint, as if he would have died.  
It was too much for her. She lifted him,  
And bore him farther on, and laid his head  
Beneath the shadow of a desert shrub ;  
And, shrouding up her face, she went away,  
And sat to watch, where he could see her not,  
Till he should die ; and, watching him, she mourned :—

“ God stay thee in thine agony, my boy !  
I cannot see thee die ; I cannot brook  
Upon thy brow to look,  
And see death settle on my cradle joy.  
How have I drunk the light of thy blue eye !  
And could I see thee die ?

“ I did not dream of this when thou wast straying,  
Like an unbound gazelle, among the flowers ;  
Or wearing rosy hours,  
By the rich gush of water-sources playing,

Then sinking weary to thy smiling sleep,  
So beautiful and deep.

“ Oh no ! and when I watched by thee the while,  
And saw thy bright lip curling in thy dream,  
And thought of the dark stream  
In my own land of Egypt, the far Nile,  
How prayed I that my father’s land might be  
An heritage for thee !

“ And now the grave for its cold breast hath won thee,  
And thy white, delicate limbs the earth will press ;  
And oh ! my last caress  
Must feel thee cold, for a chill hand is on thee.  
How can I leave my boy, so pillow'd there  
Upon his clustering hair ! ”

She stood beside the well her God had given  
To gush in that deep wilderness, and bathed

The forehead of her child until he laughed  
In his reviving happiness, and lisped  
His infant thought of gladness at the sight  
Of the cool plashing of his mother's hand.

## THE WIDOW OF NAIN.

---

THE Roman sentinel stood helmed and tall  
Beside the gate of Nain. The busy tread  
Of comers to the city mart was done,  
For it was almost noon, and a dead heat  
Quiver'd upon the fine and sleeping dust,  
And the cold snake crept panting from the wall,  
And bask'd his scaly circles in the sun.  
Upon his spear the soldier lean'd, and kept  
His idle watch, and, as his drowsy dream  
Was broken by the solitary foot  
Of some poor mendicant, he rais'd his head  
To curse him for a tributary Jew,  
And slumberously dozed on.

'Twas now high noon.  
The dull, low murmur of a funeral  
Went through the city—the sad sound of feet  
Unmix'd with voices—and the sentinel  
Shook off his slumber, and gazed earnestly  
Up the wide street along whose pavéd way  
The silent throng crept slowly. They came on,  
Bearing a body heavily on its bier,  
And by the crowd that in the burning sun  
Walk'd with forgetful sadness, 'twas of one  
Mourn'd with uncommon sorrow. The broad gate  
Swung on its hinges, and the Roman bent  
His spear-point downwards as the bearers past  
Bending beneath their burthen. There was one—  
Only one mourner. Close behind the bier  
Crumpling the pall up in her wither'd hands,  
Follow'd an aged woman. Her short steps  
Falter'd with weakness, and a broken moan  
Fell from her lips, thicken'd convulsively  
As her heart bled afresh. The pitying crowd  
Follow'd apart, but no one spoke to her.

She had no kinsmen. She had lived alone—  
A widow with one son. He was her all—  
The only tie she had in the wide world—  
And he was dead. They could not comfort her.

Jesus drew near to Nain as from the gate  
The funeral came forth. His lips were pale  
With the noon's sultry heat. The beaded sweat  
Stood thickly on his brow, and on the worn  
And simple latchets of his sandals lay  
Thick the white dust of travel. He had come  
Since sunrise from Capernaum, staying not  
To wet his lips by green Bethsaida's pool,  
Nor wash his feet in Kishon's silver springs,  
Nor turn him southward upon Tabor's side  
To catch Gilboa's light and spicy breeze.  
Genesareth stood cool upon the East,  
Fast by the sea of Galilee, and there  
The weary traveller might bide till eve,  
And on the alders of Bethulia's plains  
The grapes of Palestine hung ripe and wild,

Yet turn'd he not aside, but gazing on  
From every swelling mount, he saw afar  
Amid the hills the humble spires of Nain,  
The place of his next errand, and the path  
Touch'd not Bethulia, and a league away  
Upon the East lay pleasant Galilee.

Forth from the city-gate the pitying crowd  
Follow'd the stricken mourner. They came near  
The place of burial, and, with straining hands,  
Closer upon her breast she clasp'd the pall,  
And with a gasping sob, quick as a child's,  
And an inquiring wildness flashing through  
The thin, gray lashes of her fever'd eyes,  
She came where Jesus stood beeide the way.  
He look'd upon her, and his heart was moved.  
“ Weep not !” he said, and, as they stay'd the bier,  
And at his bidding laid it at his feet,  
He gently drew the pall from out her grasp  
And laid it back in silence from the dead.  
With troubled wonder the mute throng drew near,

And gaz'd on his calm looks. A minute's space  
He stood and pray'd. Then taking the cold hand  
He said, " Arise !" And instantly the breast  
Heav'd in its cerements, and a sudden flush  
Ran through the lines of the divided lips,  
And, with a murmur of his mother's name,  
He trembled and sat upright in his shroud.  
And, while the mourner hung upon his neck,  
Jesus went calmly on his way to Nain.

## DAWN.

---

*"That line I learned not in the old sad song."*

CHARLES LAMB.

---

Throw up the window ! 'Tis a morn for life  
In its most subtle luxury. The air  
Is like a breathing from a rarer world ;  
And the south wind is like a gentle friend,  
Parting the hair so softly on my brow.  
It has come over gardens, and the flowers  
That kissed it are betrayed ; for as it parts,  
With its invisible fingers, my loose hair,



I know it has been trifling with the rose,  
And stooping to the violet. There is joy  
For all God's creatures in it. The wet leaves  
Are stirring at its touch, and birds are singing  
As if to breathe were music, and the grass  
Sends up its modest odour with the dew,  
Like the small tribute of humility.

I had awoke from an unpleasant dream,  
And light was welcome to me. I looked out  
To feel the common air, and when the breath  
Of the delicious morning met my brow  
Cooling its fever, and the pleasant sun  
Shone on familiar objects, it was like  
The feeling of the captive who comes forth  
From darkness to the cheerful light of day.  
Oh ! could we wake from sorrow ; were it all  
A troubled dream like this, to cast aside  
Like an untimely garment with the morn ;  
Could the long fever of the heart be cooled  
By a sweet breath from nature ; or the gloom

Of a bereaved affection pass away  
With looking on the lively tint of flowers—  
How lightly were the spirit reconciled  
To make this beautiful, bright world its home !

## SATURDAY AFTERNOON.

(A PICTURE.)

---

I LOVE to look on a scene like this,  
Of wild and careless play,  
And persuade myself that I am not old,  
And my locks are not yet gray ;  
For it stirs the blood in an old man's heart,  
And makes his pulses fly,  
To catch the thrill of a happy voice,  
And the light of a pleasant eye.

I have walked the world for fourscore years ;  
And they say that I am old,

And my heart is ripe for the reaper, Death,  
And my years are well nigh told.  
It is very true ; it is very true ;  
I'm old, and " I 'bide my time :"  
But my heart will leap at a scene like this  
And I half renew my prime.

Play on, play on ; I am with you there,  
In the midst of your merry ring ;  
I can feel the thrill of the daring jump,  
And the rush of the breathless swing.  
I hide with you in the fragrant hay,  
And I whoop the smothered call,  
And my feet slip up on the seedy floor,  
And I care not for the fall.

I am willing to die when my time shall come,  
And I shall be glad to go ;  
For the world is at best a weary place,  
And my pulse is getting low ;

But the grave is dark, and the heart will fail  
In treading its gloomy way ;  
And it wiles my heart from its dreariness,  
To see the young so gay.

A CHILD'S FIRST IMPRESSION OF A STAR.

---

SHE had been told that God made all the stars  
That twinkled up in heaven, and now she stood  
Watching the coming of the twilight on,  
As if it were a new and perfect world,  
And this were its first eve. She stood alone  
By the low window, with the silken lash  
Of her soft eye upraised, and her sweet mouth  
Half parted with the new and strange delight  
Of beauty that she could not comprehend,  
And had not seen before. The purple folds  
Of the low sunset clouds, and the blue sky  
That looked so still and delicate above,

Filled her young heart with gladness, and the eve  
Stole on with its deep shadows, and she still  
Stood looking at the west with that half-smile,  
As if a pleasant thought were at her heart.  
Presently, in the edge of the last tint  
Of sunset; where the blue was melted in  
To the faint golden mellowness, a star  
Stood suddenly. A laugh of wild delight  
Burst from her lips, and putting up her hands,  
Her simple thought broke forth expressively—  
“ Father, dear father, God has made a star !”

**MAY.**

---

On the merry May has pleasant hours,  
And dreamily they glide,  
As if they floated like the leaves  
Upon a silver tide.  
The trees are full of crimson buds,  
And the woods are full of birds,  
And the waters flow to music  
Like a tune with pleasant words.

The verdure of the meadow-land  
Is creeping to the hills,

The sweet, blue-bosom'd violets  
Are blooming by the rills ;  
The lilac has a load of balm  
For every wind that stirs,  
And the larch stands green and beautiful  
Amid the sombre firs.

There's perfume upon every wind—  
Music in every tree—  
Dews for the moisture-loving flowers—  
Sweets for the sucking bee ;  
The sick come forth for the healing breeze,  
The young are gathering flowers ;  
And life is a tale of poetry,  
That is told by golden hours.

If 'tis not true philosophy,  
That the spirit when set free  
Still lingers about its olden home,  
In the flower and the tree,

---

It is very strange that our pulses thrill  
At the tint of a voiceless thing,  
And our hearts yearn so with tenderness  
In the beautiful time of Spring.

ON WITNESSING A BAPTISM.

---

SHE stood up in the meekness of a heart  
Resting on God, and held her fair young child  
Upon her bosom, with its gentle eyes  
Folded in sleep, as if its soul had gone  
To whisper the baptismal vow in heaven.  
The prayer went up devoutly, and the lips  
Of the good man glowed fervently with faith  
That it would be, even as he had pray'd,  
And the sweet child be gather'd to the fold  
Of Jesus. As the holy words went on  
Her lips mov'd silently, and tears, fast tears,  
Stole from beneath her lashes, and upon  
The forehead of the beautiful child lay soft

With the baptismal water. Then I thought  
That, to the eye of God, that mother's tears  
Would be a deeper covenant, which sin  
And the temptations of the world, and death,  
Would leave unbroken, and that she would know  
In the clear light of heaven, how very strong  
The prayer which press'd them from her heart had been  
In leading its young spirit up to God.

THE ANNOYER.

---

" Common as light is love,  
And its familiar voice wearies not ever."

SHELLEY.

---

LOVE knoweth every form of air,  
    And every shape of earth,  
And comes, unbidden, everywhere,  
    Like thought's mysterious birth.  
The moonlit sea and the sunset sky  
    Are written with Love's words,  
And you hear his voice unceasingly,  
    Like song in the time of birds.

He peeps into the warrior's heart  
From the tip of a stooping plume,  
And the serried spears, and the many men  
May not deny him room.  
He'll come to his tent in the weary night,  
And be busy in his dream ;  
And he'll float to his eye in morning light  
Like a fay on a silver beam.

He hears the sound of the hunter's gun,  
And rides on the echo back,  
And sighs in his ear like a stirring leaf,  
And flits in his woodland track.  
The shade of the wood, and the sheen of the river  
The cloud, and the open sky—  
He will haunt them all with his subtle quiver,  
Like the light of your very eye.

The fisher hangs over the leaning boat,  
And ponders the silver sea,  
For Love is under the surface hid,  
And a spell of thought has he,

He heaves the wave like a bosom sweet,  
And speaks in the ripple low,  
Till the bait is gone from the crafty line,  
And the hook hangs bare below.

He blurs the print of the scholar's book,  
And intrudes in the maiden's prayer,  
And profanes the cell of the holy man,  
In the shape of a lady fair.  
In the darkest night, and the bright daylight,  
In earth, and sea, and sky,  
In every home of human thought,  
Will Love be lurking nigh.

## ROARING BROOK.

(A PASSAGE OF SCENERY IN CONNECTICUT.)

---

It was a mountain stream that with the leap  
Of its impatient waters had worn out  
A channel in the rock, and wash'd away  
The earth that had upheld the tall old trees,  
Till it was darken'd with the shadowy arch  
Of the o'er-leaning branches. Here and there  
It loiter'd in a broad and limpid pool  
That circled round demurely, and anon  
Sprung violently over where the rock  
Fell suddenly, and bore its bubbles on,  
Till they were broken by the hanging moss,

As anger with a gentle word grows calm.  
In spring-time, when the snows were coming down,  
And in the flooding of the Autumn rains,  
No foot might enter there—but in the hot  
And thirsty summer, when the fountains slept,  
You could go up its channel in the shade,  
To the far sources, with a brow as cool  
As in the grotto of the anchorite.  
Here when an idle student have I come,  
And in a hollow of the rock lain down  
And mus'd until the eventide, or read  
Some fine old poet till my nook became  
A haunt of faery, or the busy flow  
Of water to my spell-bewilder'd ear  
Seem'd like the din of some gay tournament.  
Pleasant have been such hours, and tho' the wise  
Have said that I was indolent, and they  
Who taught me have reprov'd me that I play'd  
The truant in the leafy month of June,  
I deem it true philosophy in him  
Whose path is in the rude and busy world,  
To loiter with these wayside comforters.

## LINES ON THE NEW YEAR.

JANUARY 1, 1825.

---

FLEETLY hath past the year. The seasons came  
Duly as they are wont—the gentle Spring,  
And the delicious Summer, and the cool,  
Rich Autumn, with the nodding of the grain,  
And Winter, like an old and hoary man,  
Frosty and stiff—and so are chronicled.  
We have found beauty in the new green leaf,  
And in the first blown violets ; we have drunk  
Cool water from the rock, and in the shade  
Sunk to the noon-tide slumber ;—we have eat  
The mellow fruitage of the bending tree,  
And girded to our pleasant wanderings

When the cool wind came freshly from the hills ;  
And when the tinting of the Autumn leaves  
Had faded from its glory, we have sat  
By the good fires of Winter, and rejoiced  
Over the fulness of the gathered sheaf.  
“ God hath been good to us ! ” “ Tis He whose hand  
Moulded the sunny hills, and hollowed out  
The shelter of the valleys, and doth keep  
The fountains in their secret places cool ;  
And it is He who leadeth up the sun  
And ordereth the starry influences,  
And tempereth the keenness of the frost—  
And therefore, in the plenty of the feast,  
And in the lifting of the cup, let HIM  
Have praises for the well completed year.

## LINES ON THE NEW YEAR.

JANUARY 1, 1826.

---

WINTER is come again. The sweet south-west  
Is a forgotten wind, and the strong earth  
Has laid aside its mantle to be bound  
By the frost fetter. There is not a sound,  
Save of the skaiter's heel, and there is laid  
An icy finger on the lip of streams,  
And the clear icicle hangs cold and still,  
And the snow-fall is noiseless as a thought.  
Spring has a rushing sound, and Summer sends  
Many sweet voices with its odours out,  
And Autumn rustleth its decaying robe  
With a complaining whisper. Winter's dumb !

God made his ministry a silent one,  
And he has given him a foot of stee  
And an unlovely aspect, and a breath  
Sharp to the senses—and we know that He  
Tempereth well, and hath a meaning hid  
Under the shadow of his hand. Look up!  
And it shall be interpreted. Your home  
Hath a temptation now. There is no voice  
Of waters with beguiling for your ear,  
And the cool forest and the meadows green  
Witch not your feet away ; and in the dells  
There are no violets, and upon the hills  
There are no sunny places to lie down.  
You must go in, and by your cheerful fire  
Wait for the offices of love, and hear  
Accents of human tenderness, and feast  
Your eye upon the beauty of the young.  
It is a season for the quiet thought,  
And the still reckoning with thyself. The year  
Gives back the spirits of its dead, and time  
Whispers the history of its vanished hours ;

And the heart, calling its affections up,  
Counteth its wasted treasure. Life stands still  
And settles like a fountain, and the eye  
Sees clearly through its depths, and noteth all  
That stirred its troubled waters. It is well  
That Winter with the dying year should come!

ON THE DEATH OF A YOUNG GIRL.

---

'Tis difficult to feel that she is dead.  
Her presence, like the shadow of a wing  
That is just lessening in the upper sky,  
Lingers upon us. We can hear her voice,  
And for her step we listen, and the eye  
Looks for her wonted coming with a strange,  
Forgetful earnestness. We cannot feel  
That she will no more come—that from her cheek  
The delicate flush has faded, and the light  
Dead in her soft dark eye, and on her lip,  
That was so exquisitely pure, the dew  
Of the damp grave has fallen ! Who, so lov'd,  
Is left among the living ? Who hath walk'd

---

The world with such a winning loveliness,  
And on its bright brief journey, gather'd up  
Such treasures of affection ? She was lov'd  
Only as idols are. She was the pride  
Of her familiar sphere—the daily joy  
Of all who on her gracefulness might gaze,  
And in the light and music of her way,  
Have a companion's portion. Who could feel  
While looking upon beauty such as hers,  
That it would ever perish ! It is like  
The melting of a star into the sky  
While you are gazing on it, or a dream  
In its most ravishing sweetness rudely broken.

**ANDRE'S REQUEST TO WASHINGTON.**

---

It is not the fear of death  
That damps my brow ;  
It is not for another breath  
I ask thee now ;  
I can die with a lip unstirr'd  
And a quiet heart—  
Let but this prayer be heard  
Ere I depart.

I can give up my mother's look—  
My sister's kiss ;  
I can think of love—yet brook  
A death like this !



I can give up the young fame  
I burn'd to win—  
All—but the spotless name  
I glory in !

Thine is the power to give,  
Thine to deny,  
Joy for the hour I live—  
Calmness to die.  
By all the brave should cherish,  
By my dying breath,  
I ask that I may perish  
By a soldier's death !

## SONNET—WINTER.

---

THE frozen ground looks gray. 'Twill shut the snow  
Out from its bosom, and the flakes will fall  
Softly, and lie upon it. The hushed flow  
Of the ice-covered waters, and the call  
Of the cold driver to his oxen slow,  
And the complaining of the gust, are all  
That I can hear of music—would that I  
With the green summer like a leaf might die !  
So will a man grow gray, and on his head  
The snow of years lie visibly, and so  
Will come a frost when his green years have fled  
And his chilled pulses sluggishly will flow,  
And his deep voice be shaken—would that I  
In the green summer of my youth might die !

## SONNET.

---

STORM had been on the hills. The day had worn  
As if a sleep upon the hours had crept ;  
And the dark clouds that gather'd at the morn  
In dull, impenetrable masses slept,  
And the wet leaves hung droopingly, and all  
Was like the mournful aspect of a pall.  
Suddenly on the horizon's edge a blue  
And delicate line, as of a pencil, lay,  
And as it wider and intenser grew,  
The darkness removed silently away,  
And, with the splendor of a God, broke through  
The perfect glory of departing day—  
So, when his stormy pilgrimage is o'er,  
Will light upon the dying Christian pour.

## SONNET.

---

**B**EAUTIFUL robin ! with thy feathers red  
Contrasting sweetly with the soft green tree,  
Making thy little flights as thou art led  
By things that tempt a simple one like thee—  
I would that thou couldst warble me to tears  
As lightly as the birds of other years !  
  
Idly to lie beneath an April sun,  
Pressing the perfume from the tender grass ;  
To watch a joyous rivulet leap on  
With the clear tinkle of a music glass,  
And as I saw the early robin pass,  
To hear him thro' his little compass run—  
Hath been a joy that I shall no more know  
Before I to my better portion go.

### THE TABLE OF EMERALD.

---

" Deep, it is said, under yonder pyramid, has for ages lain concealed the Table of Emerald, on which the thrice-great Hermes engraved before the flood the secret of alchemy that gives gold at will."

MOORE'S EPICUREAN.

---

THAT Emerald vast of the Pyramid—  
Were I where it is laid,  
I would ask no king for his weary crown,  
As its mystic words were said.  
The pomp of wealth, the show of power,  
In vain for me would shine,  
And nought that brings the mind a care  
Would win bright gold of mine.



Would I feast all day—revel all night—  
    Laugh with a secret sadness ?  
Would I sleep away the breezy morn,  
    And wake to the goblet's madness ?  
Would I spend no time and no golden ore  
    For the wisdom that sages knew ?  
Would I run to waste with a human mind  
    To its holy trust untrue ?

Oh ! knew I the depth of that emerald spell,  
    And had I the gold it brings,  
I would never load with a mocking joy  
    My spirit's mounting wings.  
I would bind no wreath to my brow to day  
    That would leave a stain to-morrow,  
Nor drink a draught of joy to-night,  
    That would change with morn to sorrow.

But, oh, I would burst this chain of care,  
    And be spirit and fancy-free ;  
My mind should range where it longs to go  
    And the limitless wind outflee.

I would place my foot on my heaps of ore  
To mount to Wisdom's throne,  
And buy, with the wealth of an Indian mine,  
To be left, of care, alone !

Ambition ! my lip would laugh to scorn  
Thy robe and thy gleaming sword !  
I would follow sooner a woman's eye,  
Or a child's imperfect word ;  
But come with the glory of human thought,  
And the light of the scholar's brow,  
And my heart shall be taught forgetfulness,  
And alone at thine altar bow.

There was one mild eye— there was one deep tone—  
They were dear to this heart of mine !  
Dearer to me was that mild blue eye  
Than the lamp on wisdom's shrine.  
My soul brought up from its deepest cell  
The sum of its earthly love ;  
But it could not buy her wing from Heaven,  
And she flew to her rest above.

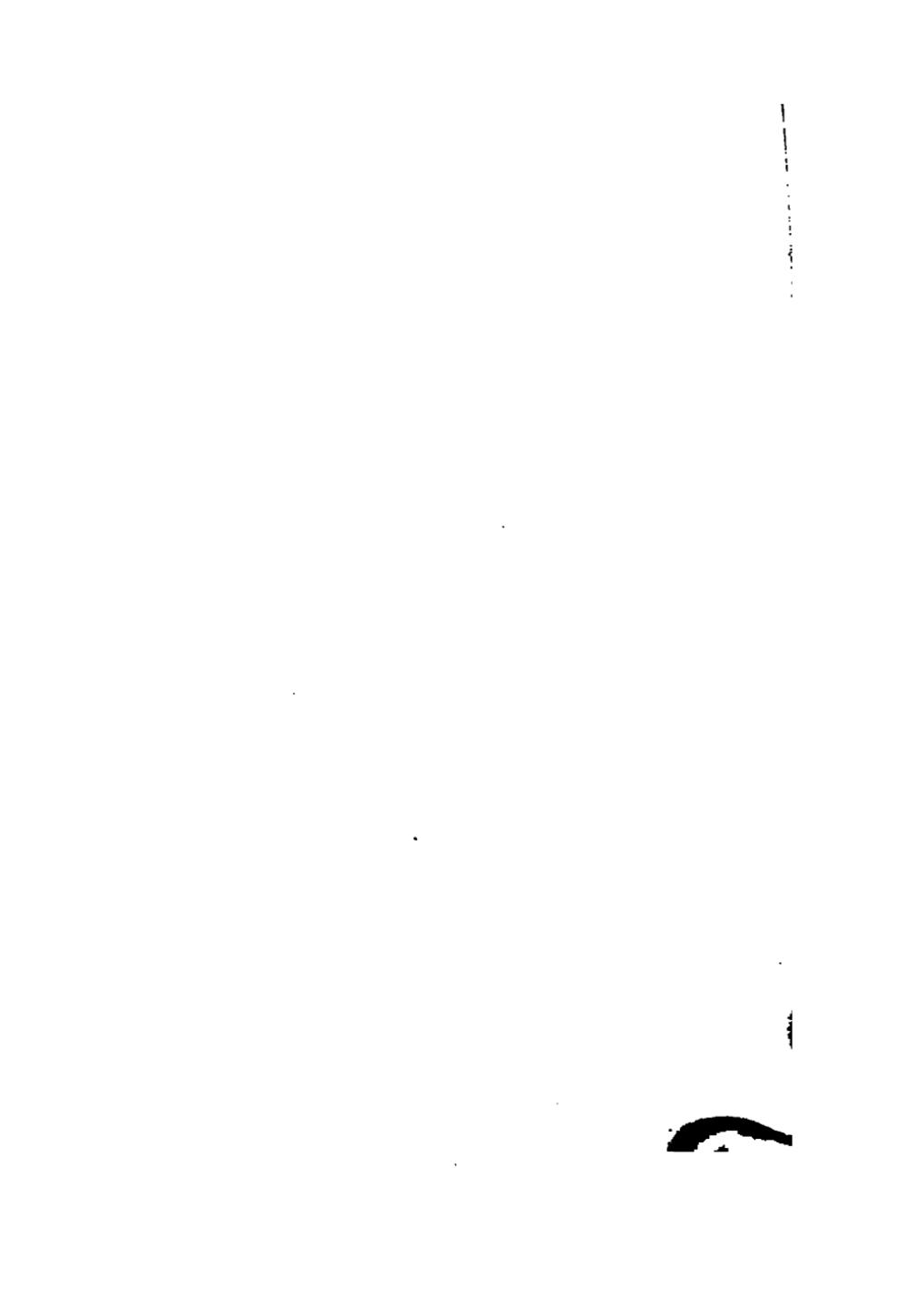


That first deep love I have taken back  
In my rayless breast to hide ;  
With the tear it brought for a burning seal  
'Twill there for ever bide.  
I may stretch on now to another goal,  
I may feed my thoughts of flame—  
The tie is broken that kept me back,  
And my mind speeds on—for fame !

But, alas ! I am dreaming as if I knew  
The spell of the tablet green !  
I forget how like to a broken reed  
Is the hope on which I lean.  
There is nothing true of my idle dream  
But the wreck of my early love,  
And my mind is coin'd for my daily bread,  
And how can it soar above ?

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